



## WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

### BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

**Report to the Elected Members of Wicklow County Council under Section 20(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) on the submissions received during the public consultation of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031**



Issue date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025



SECTION 1 CONTENTS & INTRODUCTION		PAGE
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Next Steps	1
1.3	Draft Consultation Process	2
1.4	Proposed Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan 2022-2028	2
1.5	Consideration of Submissions	2
SECTION 2 CHIEF EXECUTIVES RECOMMENDED PROPOSED AMENDMENTS		
Part A.4	Overall Strategy	4
Part B.1	Town Centre Regeneration and Opportunity Sites	5
Part B.2	Housing Development	7
Part B.4	Tourism	8
Part B.6	Heritage/Biodiversity	9
Part B.7	Infrastructure	10
Part B.8	Zoning	13
Part B.8.1	Specific Local Objectives	14
Part B.8.2	Map Amendments	20
	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Appendix 4:</b> Local Transport Assessment	22
	<b>Appendix 5:</b> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	22
	<b>Appendix 6:</b> Blessington Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation	22
SECTION 3 LIST OF SUBMISSIONS		39
SECTION 4 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT OF SUBMISSIONS		
4.1	<b>Prescribed Bodies</b>	
4.1.1	Office of the Planning Regulator	45
4.1.2	National Transport Authority	69
4.1.3	Transport Infrastructure Ireland	78
4.1.4	Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage	88
4.1.5	Department of Transport	91
4.1.6	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	92
4.1.7	Department of the Education	103
4.1.8	Environmental Protection Agency	107
4.1.9	Office of Public Works OPW	108
4.1.10	Health Service Executive HSE	115
4.1.11	Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)	125
4.2	<b>Submissions from Elected Members</b>	
4.2.1	Cllr Gerry O'Neil	130
4.2.2	Cllr Jason Mulhall	132



<b>4.3</b>	<b>General Submissions</b>	
<b>Part A</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	
<b>A.1.</b>	General Comments on Plan Structure	<b>140</b>
<b>A.2</b>	Core Strategy, Population and Housing Targets	<b>141</b>
<b>Part B</b>	<b>B.1 Town Centre Regeneration and Opportunity Sites</b>	
<b>B.1.1</b>	Town Centre Regeneration	<b>144</b>
<b>B.1.2</b>	Retail Strategy and Objectives	<b>145</b>
<b>B.1.3</b>	Opportunity Sites	
<b>B.1.3.1</b>	OP1	<b>147</b>
<b>B.1.3.2</b>	OP 4-6	<b>148</b>
<b>B.1.3.3</b>	OP 7	<b>149</b>
<b>B.1.3.4</b>	OP8	<b>152</b>
	<b>B.2 Housing Development</b>	
<b>B.2.1</b>	Zoning for Residential Development	<b>157</b>
	<b>B.3 Economic Development</b>	
<b>B.3.1</b>	Creation of Employment	<b>160</b>
	<b>B.4 Tourism</b>	
<b>B.4.1</b>	Blessington Greenway	<b>162</b>
<b>B.4.2</b>	Blessington Lakes	<b>164</b>
<b>B.4.3</b>	Tourist Accommodation & Visitor Facilities	<b>165</b>
<b>B.4.4</b>	Tourist Attractions / Infrastructure	<b>166</b>
	<b>B.5 Community Development</b>	
<b>B.5.1</b>	Sports and Recreation – Athletics and Ball Sports	<b>167</b>
<b>B.5.2</b>	Provision of a Swimming Pool	<b>176</b>
<b>B.5.3</b>	Sports and Recreation -Water Sports	<b>178</b>
<b>B.5.4</b>	Schools, Services and General Community Facilities	<b>180</b>
<b>B.5.5</b>	Community Gardens/Allotments	<b>184</b>
	<b>B.6 Heritage/Biodiversity</b>	
<b>B.6.1</b>	Ecosystems	<b>185</b>
<b>B.6.2</b>	Architectural Heritage	<b>187</b>
	<b>B.7 Infrastructure</b>	
<b>B.7.1</b>	Road network	<b>188</b>
<b>B.7.1.1</b>	Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR)	<b>188</b>
<b>B.7.1.2</b>	Condition of the N81	<b>190</b>
<b>B.7.1.3</b>	Local roads	<b>190</b>



<b>B.7.2</b>	Bus/Train Services	<b>191</b>
<b>B.7.2.1</b>	Direct Service to Dublin City	<b>191</b>
<b>B.7.3</b>	Parking	
<b>B.7.3.1</b>	Town Centre public realm improvements & car parking	<b>193</b>
<b>B.7.3.2</b>	Car parking - General	<b>195</b>
<b>B.7.4</b>	Footpaths and Cycleways	<b>196</b>
<b>B.7.5</b>	Accessibility & Safety	<b>197</b>
<b>B.7.6</b>	Electricity Supply, Water and Sewerage Infrastructure	<b>198</b>
<b>B.7.6.1</b>	Waste Water Treatment Plant	<b>198</b>
<b>B.7.6.2</b>	ESB network	<b>201</b>
<b>B.7.7</b>	General	<b>201</b>

## **B.8 Zoning**

<b>B.8.1</b>	Zoning Requests	<b>202</b>
<b>B.8.2</b>	Specific Local Objectives	<b>261</b>
	Specific Local Objective 1-Lands at Naas Road	<b>261</b>
	Specific Local Objective 2-Blessington Demesne (West)	<b>262</b>
	Specific Local Objective 3-Quarry Employment Lands	<b>266</b>
	Specific Local Objective 4-Doran's Pit	<b>269</b>
	Specific Local Objective 5-Burgage More (North)	<b>280</b>
	Specific Local Objective 6- Burgage More (Central)	<b>280</b>
	Specific Local Objective 7- Burgage More (South)	<b>280</b>

<b>Appendix 3 Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit</b>	<b>283</b>
---	------------

<b>SECTION 5 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>288</b>
--	------------

<b>SECTION 6 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM 1</b>
---

<b>SECTION 7 PROPOSED AMENDED ADDITIONAL MAPS/DRAWINGS</b>
--

**Map No.1** Land Use Zoning Objectives ( As recommended)

**Map No. 2A** Built Heritage

**Map 4A** Flood Risk - Present Day

**Map 4B** Flood Risk - Potential Future Scenario

**Map 4C** Flood Risk - Present Day & Recommended Land Use Zoning Objectives

**Map 4D** Flood Risk –Potential Future Scenario & Recommended Land Use Zoning Objectives

**Map 5A** Transport Strategy

**Map 5B** Transport Strategy –Opportunity Sites

**Map 6A** Active Travel Strategy

**Map 6B** Active Travel Strategy –Opportunity Sites



## Section 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This Chief Executive's Report is submitted under Section 20(3)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It is part of the formal statutory process of the preparation of a Local Area Plan. 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 LAP, 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 of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.

The members of the planning authority are required to consider the proposal to make the local area plan and this report of the Chief Executive.

### 1.2 Next Steps

Following consideration of this Chief Executive's Report, the local area plan shall be deemed to be made in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Executive as set out in this Report, 6 weeks after the furnishing of the report to the members, unless the planning authority, by resolution, decides to either:

- i. make or amend the plan otherwise than as recommended in this report, or
- ii. not make the plan.

**This matter is to be on the agenda for consideration at the County Council meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.**

Where, following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report, it appears to the members of the authority that the Draft LAP should be altered, and the proposed alteration would if made be a material alteration of the draft LAP, the Planning Authority shall, not later than 3 weeks after the passing of a resolution publish notice of the proposed material alteration in one or more newspapers circulating in its area, and send notice of the proposed material alteration to the Minister, to the Office of the Planning Regulator, the Board and the prescribed authorities (enclosing where the authority considers it appropriate a copy of the proposed material alteration).

**In the event that material amendments to the draft plan are proposed**, the planning authority shall determine if a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Appropriate Assessment, as the case may be, is or are required to be carried out as respects one or more than one proposed material amendments to the Draft LAP.

The Chief Executive shall, not later than 2 weeks after a determination that SEA/AA of a material amendment is required, specify such period as she considers necessary following the passing of the resolution, as being required to facilitate an assessment. The planning authority shall carry out an assessment required of the proposed material amendment of the draft local area plan within the period specified by the Chief Executive.

The planning authority shall publish notice of the proposed material amendment, and where appropriate



in the circumstances, the making of a determination that a SEA/AA is required. The planning authority shall carry out the assessment within the period specified by the Chief Executive.

The notice relating to material amendments shall state –

- i. that a copy of the proposed material amendment and of any determination by the authority that a SEA/AA is required may be inspected during a stated period of not less than 4 weeks, and
- ii. that written submissions or observations with respect to the proposed material amendment and of any determination by the authority that a SEA/AA is required, may be made to the planning authority and shall be taken into consideration before the making of any material amendment.

### **1.3 Draft Consultation Process**

The draft Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031 was placed on display during the period of 30 October 2024 to 11 December 2024 (6 weeks). The aim of the consultation process was to enable the public and interested parties to give their observations on the draft LAP. A total of **253 valid** submissions were made<sup>1</sup>. The written submissions are held on file and are available for inspection on Wicklow County Council's website [here](#).

### **1.4 Proposed Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028**

The process for making Proposed Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan 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 draft LAP and the proposed variation went out on display at the same time with submissions invited. Many submissions to the draft LAP referred to the Proposed Variation in the title / introduction of their submission however the content of the submission related to the draft LAP. Such submissions are dealt with in this CE report on the draft LAP.

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

### **1.5 Consideration of Submissions**

Each submission made has been summarized and assessed in Section 4 of this report.

Section 4 is broken into three sections – Section 4.1 relates to submissions from prescribed bodies, Section 4.2 relates to submissions received from elected representatives, while Section 4.3 relates to submissions from the public.

Section 4.1 and 4.2 is organised by submitter and addresses the issues in the order set out in the submission, whereas Section 4.3 is organised by topic, rather than by submitter. The topic order is as per the order topics are set out in the draft LAP.

For ease, a full list of all of the Chief Executive's recommended amendments are provided in Section 2 of this report.

This report is submitted to the Council Members for their consideration.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that any submission received after the closing date, and any submission that did not meet the requirements of the Act with regard to identification of the submitter has been deemed invalid. Any submission with 'no content' e.g. no file attached, will appear in the list of submissions but is not assessed in Section 4 of this report.



## Section 2

### Chief Executives Recommended Proposed Amendments

To follow is a list of the Chief Executive's recommended amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan.

New text is shown in red, deleted text in ~~blue-strikethrough~~.

With respect to environmental matters:

1. The Proposed Amendments to the Draft LAP as set out in this document would further contribute towards provisions related to sectors and topics that are already provided for within the Draft Local Area Plan and the existing County Development Plan. Taking into account the measures that have already been integrated into the Draft Local Area Plan and the existing County Development Plan that provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development, any potential effects arising from these changes would either: be present already (beneficial) and would be further contributed towards, but not to a significant extent; and/or would be mitigated so as not to be significant (adverse). Taking this into account, these changes would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.
2. There are no additional sources for effects on European sites arising from the Proposed Amendments to the Draft LAP as set out in this document that have not been considered by the AA to date. Taking into account the mitigation measures that have already been integrated into the Draft Local Area Plan and the existing County Development Plan, these changes would not affect the integrity of any European site.



## Part A

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
1	<b>A.4</b> <b>Overall Strategy</b>	<p><b>Amend text as follows:</b></p> <p>In light of Sections A2 and A3.1 and A3.2 above, the development strategy adopted in this plan has a number of elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ To provide for new employment 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 has the potential for employment growth, e.g. former quarry lands, lands in the vicinity of Blessington WWTP, and on infill sites within existing industrial estates;</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ <i>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 Ding.</i></li> </ul>



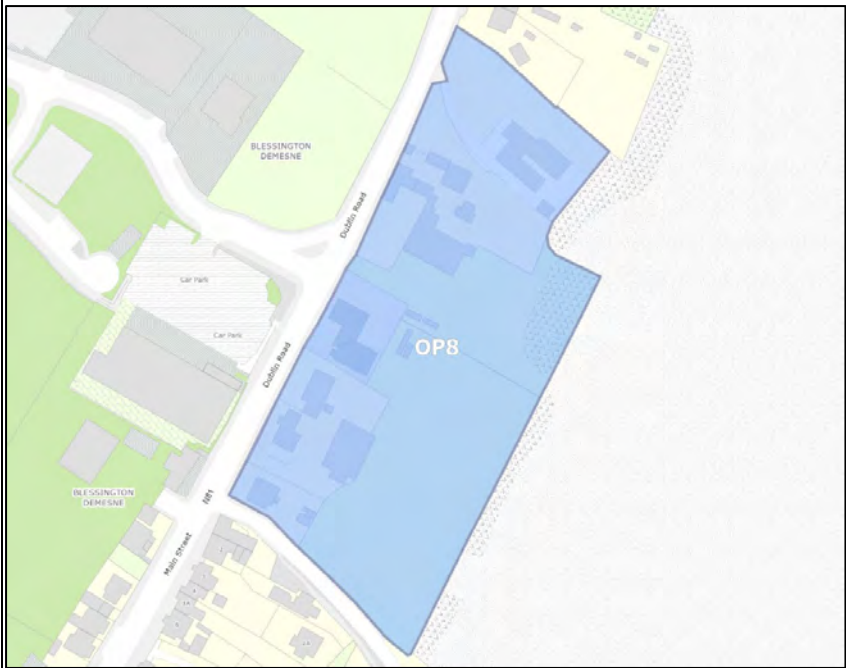
## Part B

### B.1 Town Centre Regeneration and Opportunity Sites

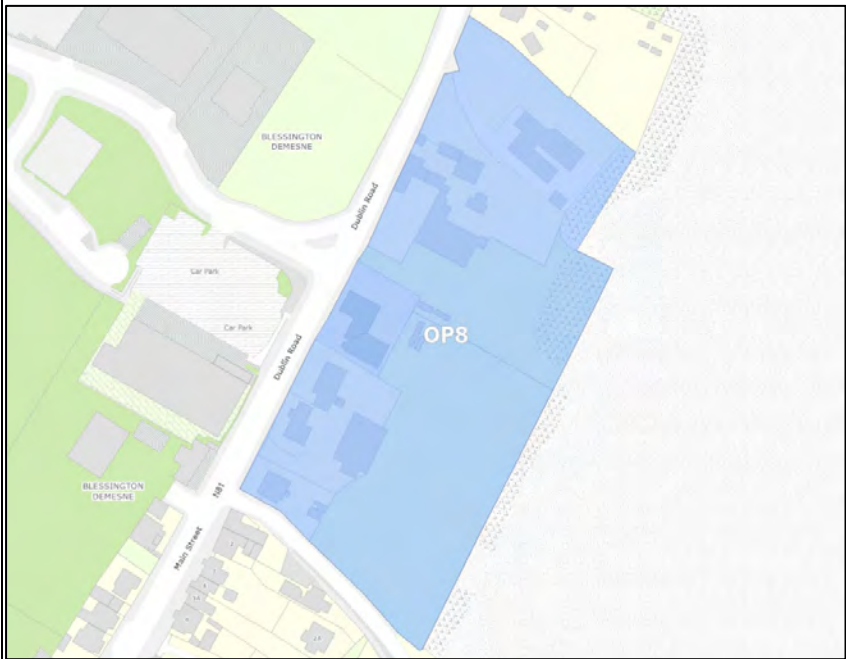
No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
2	Blessington Opportunity Sites (OP)	<p><b>Amend text as follows:</b></p> <p><i>'Opportunity sites' (OP) are identified in this Local Area Plan, which would, if developed, contribute to the enhancement of the public realm, streetscape, vibrancy, vitality, and the retail/services 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. <b>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.</b> 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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
3	OP7 Horseshoe Arch & Backlands	<p><b>Amend text as follows:</b></p> <p>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. <del>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).</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>To support the development of these lands for</del> <b>provide for</b> mixed use town centre infill development (which could include residential use). <del>Indicative block formats are provided in the below concept plan.</del> Development should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area.</li> <li>To provide for a pedestrian and cyclist only passageway through the horseshoe arch onto Blessington Main Street, <del>and ancillary pedestrian/cyclist access ways from Lakeside Downs and to the rear of the AIB.</del></li> <li><del>Vehicular access (and ancillary pedestrian/cyclist access) into these backlands shall be either via the north-eastern corner of the opportunity site through incidental green space in 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.</del></li> <li>The development of any individual landholding, or plot therein, should not 'land lock' or prejudice the development of adjacent/intervening plots. <del>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.</del></li> </ul> <p><b>Omit Figure B1.9 Concept Plan for OP7</b></p>
4	OP8 North Blessington Main Street	<p><b>Omit</b> OP8 'Concept Plan' Figure B1.11</p> <p><b>Amend</b> OP8 boundary</p>



Change from:



Change to:





## B.2 Housing Development

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
5	<b>Housing Targets &amp; Extant Planning Permissions</b>	<p><b>Amend text as follows:</b></p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>75% of</b> Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Objective BLESS7</b>	<p><i>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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>75% of</b> Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</li> <li>- <i>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.</i></li> </ul>

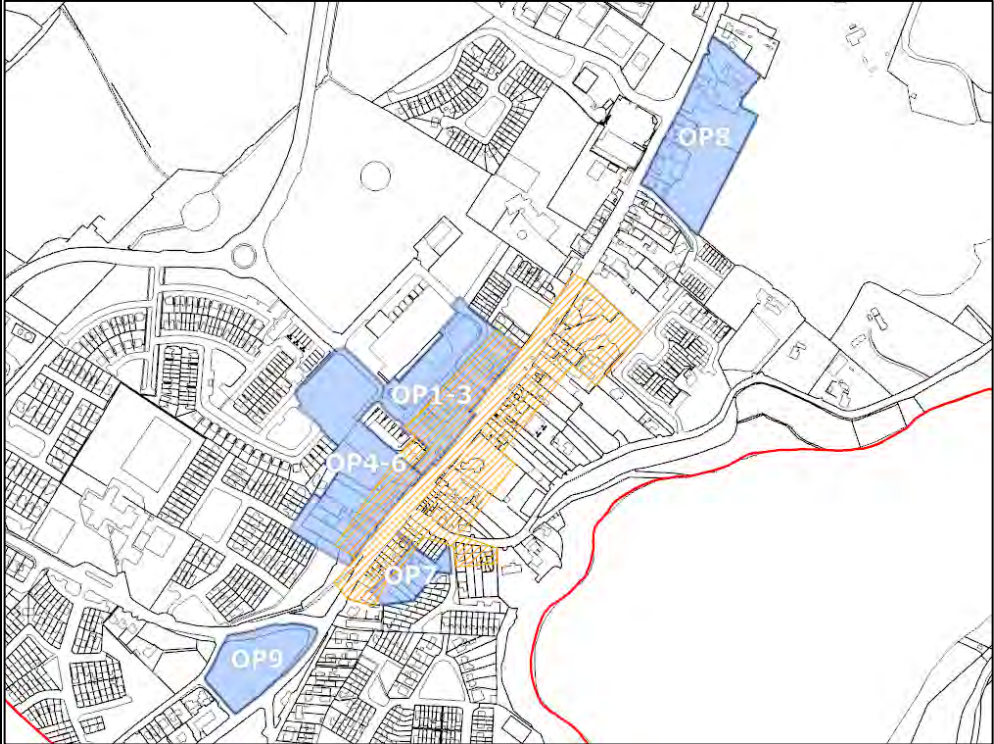


## B.4 Tourism

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

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
7	Blessington Greenway	<p><b>Amend the plan as follows:</b></p> <p><b>Blessington greenway</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><del>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, Vallemount, 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.</del></p> <p><del>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.</del></p> <p>On this basis, the priority tourism issue in the settlement is the provision of adequate tourist facilities to cater <del>to the impending proposed extension to the Blessington Greenway, future</del> <b>tourism projects in the Blessington lakeside area</b> including facilitating tourist accommodation within the settlement.</p> <p>Wicklow County Council has purchased the former HSE building on Kilbride Road to act as a hub for <del>the eGreenway</del> <b>future tourism projects in the Blessington Lakes area</b> 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 <b>possible</b> expansion of <del>the existing</del> <b>greenway and lakeside</b> tourism within the settlement. This infrastructure includes feeder routes for active travel users and additional Park&amp;Ride locations for those accessing the <del>eGreenway lakes area</del> <b>by private vehicle</b>. See Map No. 7 'Supporting <del>Tourism Greenway</del> <b>Infrastructure</b>'.</p>
8	Tourism & Recreation Objectives	<p><b>Amend objectives as follows:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS18</b></p> <p>To facilitate and support <b>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</b> <del>proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion</del> to the existing Blessington Greenway.</p> <p><b>BLESS19</b></p> <p>To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as an <del>eGreenway</del> <b>Visitor Hub supporting future tourism projects in the Blessington area.</b></p> <p><b>BLESS20</b></p> <p>To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting <del>greenway</del> <b>tourism</b> infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting <del>Greenway Tourism</del> <b>Infrastructure</b>.</p>



No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
9	Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)	<p>Add 'ACA boundary' to maps as appropriate.</p> <p><b>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)</b></p> 



No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
10	Transportation Objectives	<p><b>Include new objective:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS - XX</b> <i>In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare a Local Transport Plan for Blessington.</i></p>
11	Transportation Objectives	<p><b>Amend objective as follows:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS 49</b></p> <p><del>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,</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>— Enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity and enhanced car / bike / bus parking.</del></li> <li><del>— Bus priority along Blessington Main Street via a reduction in through traffic through the town centre, upon completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road.</del></li> <li><del>— Support for the NTA's BusConnects programme as it relates to the plan area.</del></li> <li><del>— Support for the NTA's Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan as it relates to the plan area.</del></li> </ul> <p><del>—</del></p> <p><i>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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>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;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>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);</i></li> <li>▪ <i>supporting the development of enhanced bus shelters, of secure covered bicycle parking facilities at key locations along bus routes,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>to promote and support the improvement of N81 in a manner capable of facilitating greater free flow of public transport,</i></li> <li>▪ <i>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).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Enhancing pedestrian and cycling connectivity to public transport services.</i></li> </ul>
12	Transportation Objectives	<p><b>Amend objective as follows:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS - 50</b></p> <p><del>To protect the strategic function of the N81 (and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof) as it relates to the plan area.</del> in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications.</p>



13	Transport Strategy Maps	<p><b>Amend Transport Objectives Map as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Add additional information on active travel projects</li> <li>- Add SLO areas</li> <li>- Add OP sites</li> </ul>
14	Flood Management Objectives	<p><b>Amend the objective as follows:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS 51</b></p> <p><del>Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</del></li> <li><del>• 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;</del></li> <li><del>• 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;</del></li> <li><del>• 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.</del></li> <li><del>• Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Flood Risk Guidelines and the SFRA.</del></li> </ul> <p><del>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.</del></p> <p>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 <b>OR</b> in Flood Zone C but within an area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>
15	Other Infrastructure Objectives	<p><b>Add the following text and objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Water Protection</b></p> <p>The Poulaphouca Reservoir is a critical source of raw water supply to the populations</p>



		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>BLESS-XX:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>BLESS-XX:</b> 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.</p>
--	--	---



**Part B.8      Zoning**

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
16	Zoning Objectives	<p><b>Amend the text as follows</b></p> <p>Insert new sentence at end of Zoning table:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>

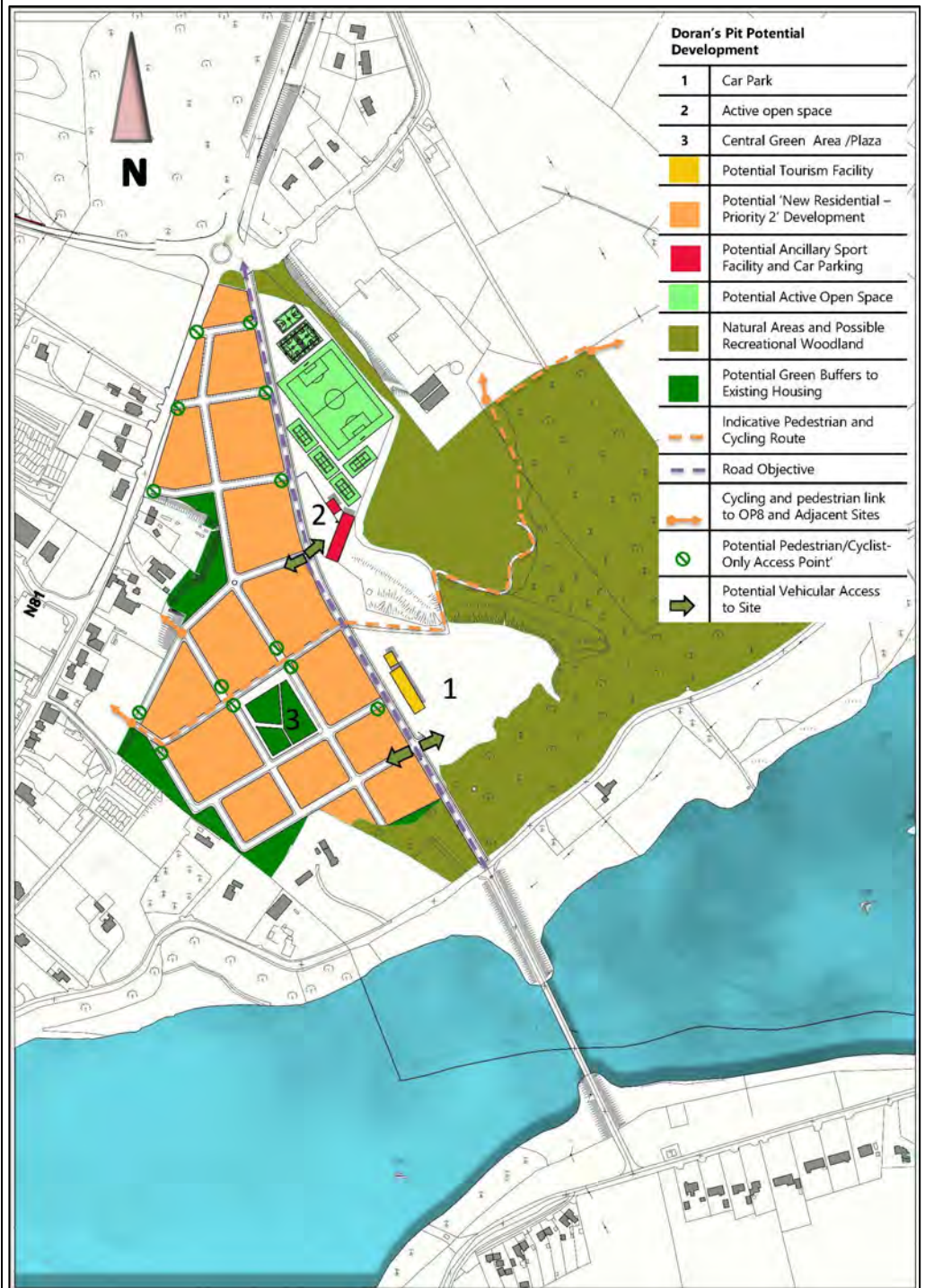


## Part B.8.1 Specific Local Objectives

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
17	Specific Local Objectives (SLO) – preamble / general	<p>(a) Amend text as follows:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>(b) Add National Monuments points onto final SLO maps.</p>
18	SLO2 Blessington Demesne (West)	<p>Amend the text of SLO2 as follows:</p> <p>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. <i>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.</i></p>
19	SLO4 Doran's Pit	<p>(a) Concept Plan: Omit the cycling and pedestrian link to the Blessington Mart lands from the SLO4 concept plan (see following page).</p>

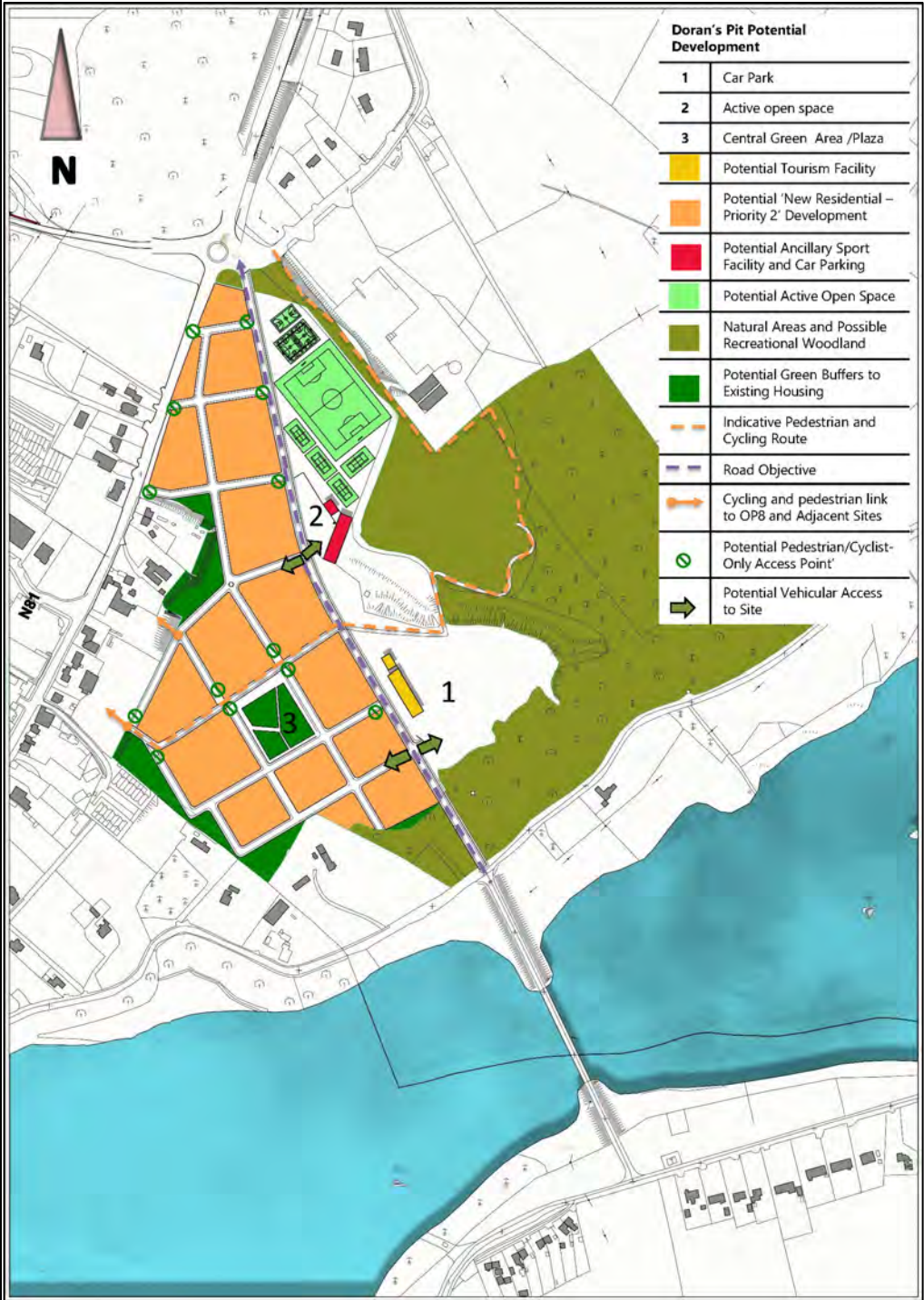


Change from:





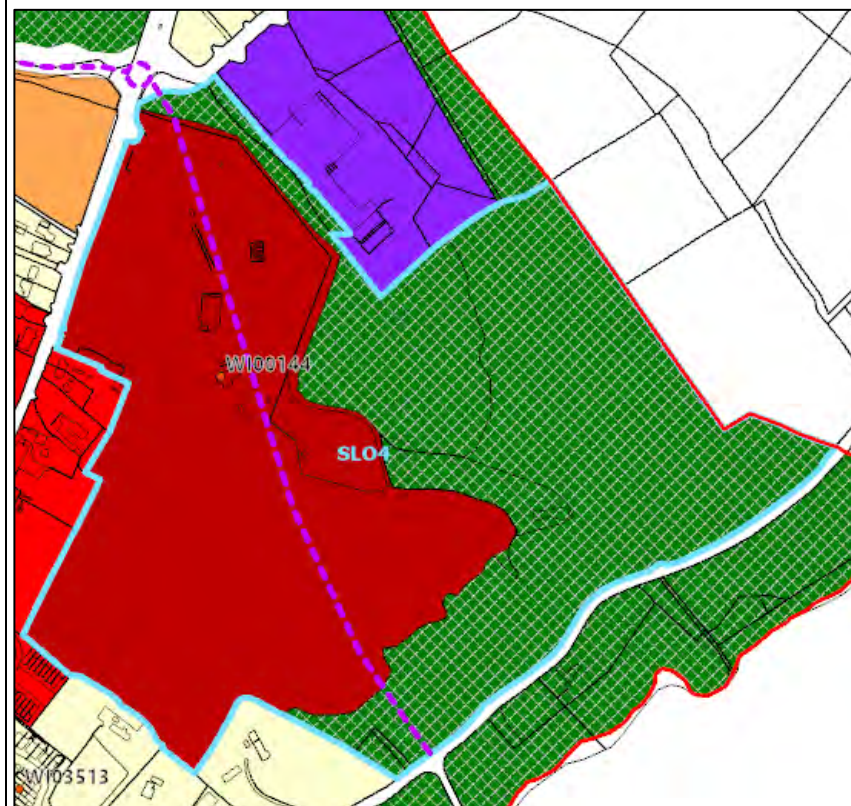
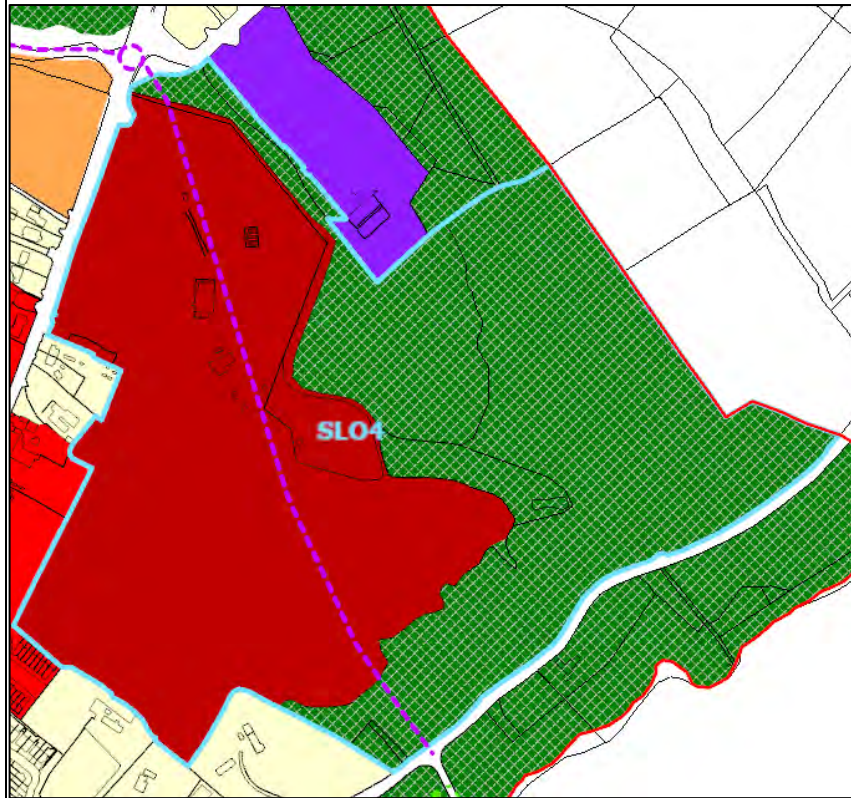
Change to:



And:



**(b) Amend** SLO4 boundary as a change consequent to Proposed Amendment No. 4



**And:**



**(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:

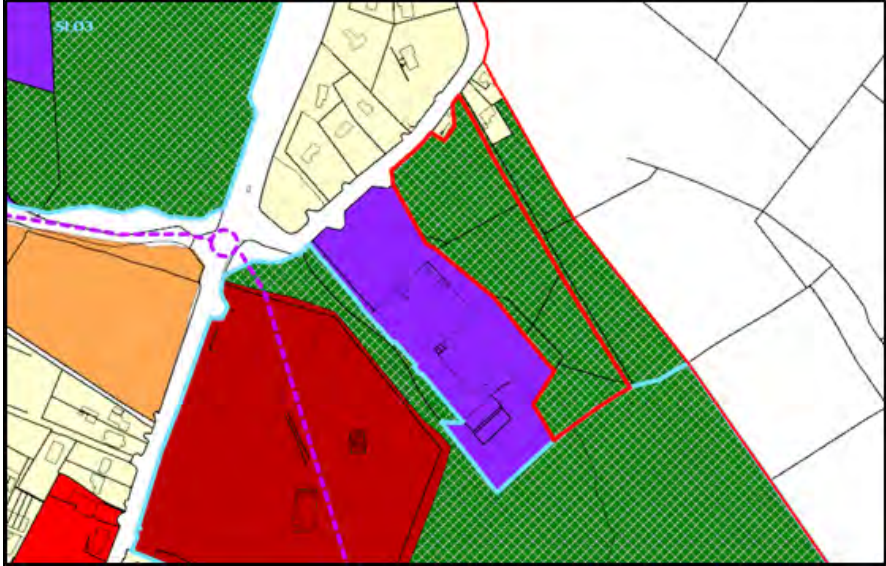
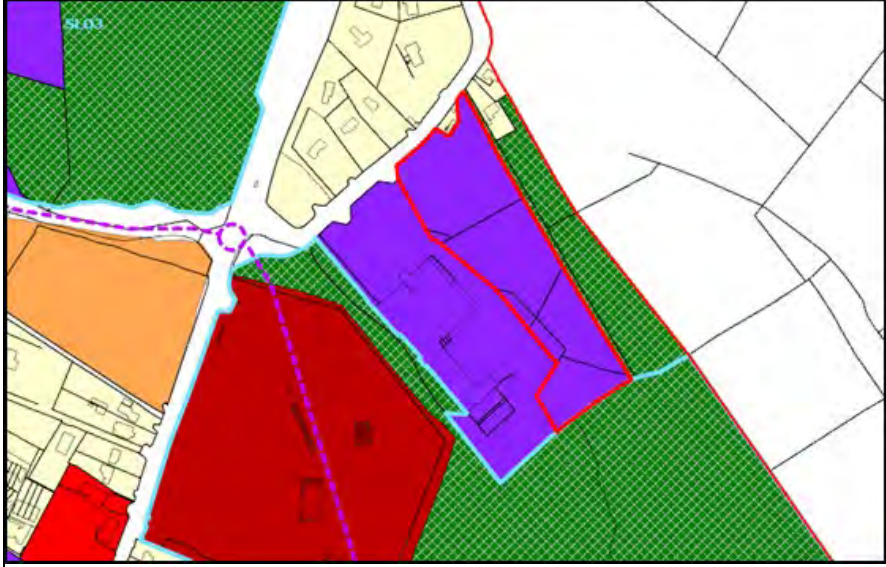
- The delivery of the road objective linking the N81 to Kilbride Road/Knockieran Bridge. The layout of this road should form an arm off the planned roundabout at the northern end of the Blessington Inner Relief Road, while the road from Blessington Mart should terminate in a junction onto this road objective, 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 developed~~ment~~ 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 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



	<p>completed and available for use upon the occupation of the 1st house.</p> <p>(d) 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 Blessington Lakes (via the road objective), while minimising the interaction between parking cars and cyclists/pedestrians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>• <del>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.</del></li> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul>
--	---



**B.8.2 Map Amendments**

20	<b>Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives</b>	<p><b>Amend Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives (and any changes consequent) as follows:</b></p> <p><b>Change from: OS2</b></p>  <p><b>Change to: E</b></p> 
----	--	--



21	<b>Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives</b>	<p><b>Amend Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives (and any changes consequent) as follows:</b></p> <p><b>Change from: RE</b></p>  <p><b>Change to: TC (including amended SLO4 boundary)</b></p> 
22	<b>Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives</b>	Amend Map 1 to show zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development Plan
23	<b>Map No 2A Built Heritage</b>	Include link to Department archaeology data sources <a href="http://www.archaeology.ie">www.archaeology.ie</a>
24	<b>Map No.6 Active Travel Strategy</b>	Omit the active travel objective through Mart lands



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 4 Local Transport Assessment

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
25	All	Review numbering and headings of sections

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

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
26	Insert at end of SFRA	<p>Map 1 Flood Risk Zones (Present day)</p> <p>Map 2 Flood Risk Zones (Future Climate Change Scenario)</p> <p>Map 3 Overlay of Flood Maps with Zoning Map</p>

### Appendix 6 Blessington Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation

No.	Section	Proposed Amendment
27	Section 6	<p><b>Amend text as follows:</b></p> <p><b>BLESS7</b></p> <p><i>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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</i></li> <li>- <i>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.</i></li> </ul>
28	Section 7	Insert new implementation tables as follows under Appendix 6:



Town Centre Objectives		Implementation	Timeframe
<b>BLESS1</b>	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
<b>BLESS2</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Such areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity Sites as identified in this plan and the Blessington Town Centre First Plan.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul>	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
<b>BLESS3</b>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street</li> <li>▪ The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre.</li> <li>▪ The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square.</li> <li>▪ Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square</li> <li>▪ The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre.</li> <li>▪ The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street.</li> </ul>	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
<b>BLESS4</b>	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	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing



	<p>as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There will be no quantitative restriction on the development of retail floorspace within the Blessington Core Retail Area.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ The development of retail floorspace outside of Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes) will not be facilitated unless absolutely necessary.</li> </ul>		
<b>BLESS5</b>	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
<b>Residential Objectives</b>		<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>BLESS6</b>	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 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.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
<b>BLESS7</b>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing



Employment Objectives		Implementation	Timeframe
<b>BLESS8</b>	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
<b>BLESS9</b>	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
<b>BLESS10</b>	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
<b>BLESS11</b>	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
<b>BLESS12</b>	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
<b>BLESS13</b>	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.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
<b>BLESS14</b>	To facilitate and support the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high	To be implemented and pursued on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development	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.	Management system and the operations of the Council's Economic Development unit, LEO, TRO, and Roads and Transportation Department.	
<b>BLESS15</b>	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
<b>BLESS16</b>	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
<b>BLESS17</b>	<p>To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle.</li> <li>▪ Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub.</li> <li>▪ Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat.</li> <li>▪ Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit.</li> </ul>	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
<b>BLESS18</b>	To facilitate and support the proposed Blessington eGreenway as an expansion to the existing Blessington Greenway.	To be proactively pursued during the lifetime of the plan by the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Medium term
<b>BLESS19</b>	To facilitate the redevelopment of the former HSE building on Kilbride Road as an eGreenway Visitor Hub.	To be proactively pursued during the lifetime of the plan by the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Medium term
<b>BLESS20</b>	To facilitate and encourage the delivery of supporting greenway infrastructure as indicated on Map No. 7 Supporting Greenway Infrastructure.	To be proactively pursued during the lifetime of the plan by the Council's Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity Directorate.	Medium term
<b>BLESS21</b>	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
<b>BLESS22</b>	<p>To positively consider the development of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) new hotels in Blessington;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>c) the development of hostels along established walking routes, the route of the proposed eGreenway within the settlement, and adjacent to existing tourism</li> </ol>	To be supported on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing



	<p>facilities;</p> <p>the improvement of, and extension to, existing tourist accommodation related developments, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</p>		
<b>BLESS23</b>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



Social Infrastructure Objectives		Implementation	Timeframe
<b>BLESS24</b>	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
<b>BLESS25</b>	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
<b>BLESS26</b>	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
<b>BLESS27</b>	To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multi-purpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To require the delivery of significant areas of outdoor play space on lands zoned AOS as part of SLO-2 and SLO-4.</li> <li>- To require the delivery of public parks on lands zoned OS1 in SLO-1 and SLO-8.</li> </ul>	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)
<b>BLESS28</b>	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 design and availability of funding mechanisms and/or	Ongoing



		through the delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites	
<b>BLESS29</b>	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.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
<b>BLESS30</b>	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
<b>BLESS31</b>	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 <sup>1</sup> .	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
<b>BLESS32</b>	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
<b>BLESS33</b>	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
<b>BLESS34</b>	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
<b>BLESS35</b>	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
<b>BLESS36</b>	To protect the following additional views: - From St. Mary's Church to Bastion Wood and Glen Ding Forest.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management	Ongoing

<sup>1</sup> 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.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From side streets/laneways east (to the Poulaphouca Reservoir/Wicklow Mountains) and west (to Glen Ding) from Blessington Main Street.</li> </ul>	system.	
<b>BLESS37</b>	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
<b>BLESS38</b>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Greenway/proposed Blessington eGreenway)</li> <li>- Glen Ding Forest</li> <li>- Wooded areas at Doran's Pit</li> <li>- Blessington Demesne (Town Park)</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>	To be pursued 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, subject to detailed design and availability of funding mechanisms and/or through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites	
<b>BLESS39</b>	<p>To require development proposals to have regard to existing green infrastructure assets (as identified within this local area plan <b>or otherwise</b>), including trees and hedgerows, that may exist within a subject site, and to consider how the biodiversity value and ecological connectivity of such assets may be maintained.</p> <p>Where existing GI assets or green corridors within a site have been identified on Map No. 3 'Key Green Infrastructure' or the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit, proposals should include measures to preserve and, where necessary, improve ecological connectivity and biodiversity value across said assets/corridors.</p>	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
<b>BLESS40</b>	<p>To facilitate the development of new green corridors within the plan area where 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The creation of green corridors through Quarry Lands, and where relevant</li> </ul>	To be pursued 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, and the Council's Heritage and Biodiversity Officers, subject	Ongoing



	<p>SLO3, to link the Deerpark watercourse and Glen Ding Forest with the plan boundary in the direction of the Red Bog SAC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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).</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>	to detailed design and availability of funding mechanisms, and/or through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites	
<b>BLESS41</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system.	Ongoing
<b>BLESS42</b>	<p>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.</p>	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing



Transportation Objectives		Implementation	Timeframe
<b>BLESS43</b>	Support the implementation of proposed road safety and active travel projects, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme</li> <li>- The Blessington Pedestrian &amp; Cyclist Improvement Scheme</li> <li>- The Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme</li> <li>- The extension of the existing Blessington Greenway into the Blessington eGreenway, as it relates to the plan area.</li> </ul>	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
<b>BLESS44</b>	Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment with regard to the delivery of new regional/distributor roads and road improvements <sup>2</sup> , including (but not limited to): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern and southern sections).</li> <li>b) The provision of a road objective through Doran's Pit, linking the N81 to Kilbride Road.</li> <li>c) The completion of a partly constructed link road in Blessington Demesne, linking the GAA grounds/educational/care facilities with Naas Road.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Short term (development led)</li> <li>b) Medium term (development led)</li> <li>c) Medium term (development led)</li> <li>d) Long Term</li> </ol>
<b>BLESS45</b>	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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The delivery of the Greater Dublin Area cycle network, as it relates to the plan area.</li> <li>- The delivery of the National Cycle Network, as it relates to the plan</li> </ul>	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	Ongoing

<sup>2</sup> 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.



	<p>area (exact route from Blessington to Naas to be determined).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The delivery of local/greenway feeder routes within the plan area (refer to Map 6 Active Travel and the accompanying Transport Assessment).</li> <li>- The delivery of identified, and other, permeability improvements within the settlement (refer to Map No. 6 Active Travel).</li> <li>- The delivery of identified, and other, traffic management measures within the settlement (refer to Map No. 5 Transport Strategy and the accompanying Transport Assessment).</li> <li>- The delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through green field and brownfield lands, as indicatively indicated on Map No. 6 Active Travel.</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>	on privately owned sites.	
<b>BLESS46</b>	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
<b>BLESS47</b>	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 accompanying Transport Assessment.) Streets without an indicated description should be considered 'local' streets.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
<b>BLESS48</b>	<p>Support the development of additional car parking areas within the plan area, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A public transport park and ride in Blessington along the N81.</li> <li>- A car park in Doran's Pit for potential greenway parking and access to adjacent woodland.</li> <li>- A car park on Active Open Space lands in Blessington Demesne to</li> </ul>	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 /	Medium Term



	serve those lands and as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding.	TII) and through their delivery in tandem with development proposals on privately owned sites.	
<b>BLESS49</b>	<p>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,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced pedestrian and cycling connectivity and enhanced car / bike / bus parking.</li> <li>- Bus priority along Blessington Main Street via a reduction in through traffic through the town centre, upon completion of the Blessington Inner Relief Road.</li> <li>- Support for the NTA's BusConnects programme as it relates to the plan area.</li> <li>- Support for the NTA's Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan as it relates to the plan area.</li> </ul>	Ongoing engagement between the NTA and the Council's Roads and Transportation Unit	Ongoing
<b>BLESS50</b>	To protect the strategic function of the N81 (and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof) as it relates to the plan area.	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing
<b>Flood Management Objectives</b>			
<b>BLESS51</b>	<p>Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments <b>in an area at risk of flooding</b> shall comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines;</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'Plan Making Justification Test' development will only be permitted where a proposal</li> </ul>	To be implemented on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the plan via the Development Management system	Ongoing



	<p>complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA.</li> </ul> <p>Where flood zone mapping <b>does not indicate a risk of flooding</b> 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.</p>		
<b>Other Infrastructure Objectives</b>			
<b>BLESS52</b>	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



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

Site ID	Current servicing status				Additional infrastructure needs to support full development of site
	Water Supply	Wastewater Infrastructure	Surface Water Infrastructure	Roads & Transportation	
<b>SLO1 Naas Road</b>	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
<b>SLO2 Blessington Demesne (west)</b>	1	2	2	2	Roads – completion of link road within site to connect Oak Drive to Naas Road – Developer +WCC Water Services – services available in Oak Drive - developer delivered Community facilities (school site) – land reservation Sports Park – Developer +WCC
<b>SLO3 Quarry Employment Lands</b>	2	2	2	2	Roads – completion of BIRR – Developer +WCC Water Services – services available from N81 or future BIRR - developer delivered Amenity park – Developer +WCC
<b>SLO4 Doran's Pit</b>	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
<b>SLO5 Burgage More (north)</b>	1	1	1	1	N/A
<b>SLO6 Burgage More (central)</b>	1	1	1	1	N/A
<b>SLO7 Burgage More (south)</b>	1	2	2	2	Roads – access via SLO6 - Developer +WCC Water Services – extension of services outside of site – Uisce Eireann.
<b>SLO8 Blessington Demesne (east)</b>					Roads – completion of BIRR – Developer +WCC Water Services – services available from Oak Drive or future BIRR - developer delivered Amenity Park – Developer +WCC



### Section 3 List of submissions

Please note, submission names marked with \*, had no files or comments attached.

Reference Number	Name	Portal Number	Reference
1	<a href="#">Claire Robinson</a>	210146	
2	<a href="#">Environmental Protection Agency</a>	123639	
3	<a href="#">John Burke</a>	122534	
4	<a href="#">Aoife Crowe*</a>	123610	
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a>	183854	
6	<a href="#">Dan Halpin</a>	161448	
7	<a href="#">Gemma Corridan*</a>	154430	
8	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a>	223353	
9	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a>	225750	
10	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a>	225858	
11	<a href="#">Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)</a>	152149	
12	<a href="#">Annuschka Wiesemann, Danielle O'Farrell, Patrick Brien</a>	110731	
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a>	173347	
14	<a href="#">S. Connolly</a>	113556	
15	<a href="#">Joan and Billy Flynn</a>	150523	
16	<a href="#">Lesley McGuire</a>	151322	
17	<a href="#">Lakeside Downs Residents Association CLG</a>	192450	
18	<a href="#">Dermot Eustace</a>	122557	
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a>	133645	
20	<a href="#">Frank Smyth</a>	<b>No online ref</b>	
21	<a href="#">Thomas Deegan</a>	144509	
22	<a href="#">Teresa Reardon</a>	194909	
23	<a href="#">Emma Edgeworth</a>	203506	
24	<a href="#">Lauren Richardson</a>	204809	
25	<a href="#">Daniel Doran</a>	205341	
26	<a href="#">Mary Glennon</a>	210622	
27	<a href="#">Fiona Bassett</a>	211805	
28	<a href="#">Sean Nolan</a>	211715	
29	<a href="#">Margaret Geoghegan*</a>	212529	
30	<a href="#">Louise Clay</a>	212333	
31	<a href="#">Vikki Murphy</a>	205637	
32	<a href="#">Elaine O'Donnell</a>	214925	
33	<a href="#">Rebecca Kelly</a>	220402	
34	<a href="#">Amaya Cowan</a>	221417	
35	<a href="#">Lisa Bothwell</a>	224721	
36	<a href="#">Surita van Zyl</a>	234323	
37	<a href="#">Kate Kidd</a>	075309	
38	<a href="#">Jim Scott</a>	084640	
39	<a href="#">Jim Walsh</a>	084928	
40	<a href="#">Aine Moran</a>	090328	
41	<a href="#">Colm Seville</a>	090413	
42	<a href="#">Gavin Dooley</a>	091440	
43	<a href="#">Tracie Hughes</a>	091540	
44	<a href="#">Jane Nolan</a>	091833	



45	<a href="#">James Woods</a>	095719
46	<a href="#">Shane Mullaney</a>	102455
47	<a href="#">Lacken National School</a>	105141
48	<a href="#">Philip Keleghan</a>	110219
49	<a href="#">James Grace</a>	133816
50	<a href="#">St. Mary's Senior National School</a>	124421
51	<a href="#">Tom Gormley</a>	125926
52	<a href="#">Alana McMahon</a>	131059
53	<a href="#">Maria Murphy</a>	142036
54	<a href="#">Steven Pettigrew</a>	142922
55	<a href="#">Anna-May Woods</a>	172909
56	<a href="#">Thomas Healy</a>	173834
57	<a href="#">Lakeshore Striders Running Club</a>	181319
58	<a href="#">Sara Clancy</a>	181107
59	<a href="#">Antoinette Connolly Burke</a>	181553
60	<a href="#">Shania Cashin</a>	181923
61	<a href="#">Alvin Pieterse</a>	182609
62	<a href="#">Gemma Rodgers</a>	183111
63	<a href="#">Orlagh Deegan</a>	183345
64	<a href="#">Anthony O Rourke</a>	185802
65	<a href="#">Lisa Dempsey</a>	190420
66	<a href="#">Pamela Mc Loughlin</a>	192709
67	<a href="#">Anne Doyle</a>	193547
68	<a href="#">Olwyn Sheehan</a>	193505
69	<a href="#">Robert Brett</a>	195407
70	<a href="#">Gillian Moore</a>	200954
71	<a href="#">Niamh Sheridan</a>	202534
72	<a href="#">Janet Deegan</a>	205732
73	<a href="#">Lisa Veighey</a>	211448
74	<a href="#">Julie Winder</a>	213853
75	<a href="#">Declan Kelly</a>	213607
76	<a href="#">Jim Haide</a>	222054
77	<a href="#">Daragh O Callaghan</a>	220405
78	<a href="#">Seamus Kelly</a>	221642
79	<a href="#">Nadine Walsh</a>	223803
80	<a href="#">Stephen</a>	225114
81	<a href="#">Niall Salmon</a>	231754
82	<a href="#">Ciara Irvin</a>	090154
83	<a href="#">Scoil Mhuire NS</a>	092410
84	<a href="#">Juliet Rouse</a>	114252
85	<a href="#">Department of Transport</a>	121452
86	<a href="#">Stephen Deegan</a>	144918
87	<a href="#">Jason Moroney</a>	145052
88	<a href="#">Sarah Byrne</a>	165224
89	<a href="#">Derek Reid</a>	210538
90	<a href="#">Caoimhe O'Brien</a>	214816
91	<a href="#">Keira Eva Mooney</a>	120714
92	<a href="#">John Dooley</a>	134344
93	<a href="#">Raymond Cummins</a>	151458
94	<a href="#">Sue Finn</a>	150824



95	<a href="#">Liam Mooney</a>	191048
96	<a href="#">Tony Griffin</a>	112053
97	<a href="#">Jerome Mooney Griffin</a>	112351
98	<a href="#">Joan Rose Mooney</a>	112513
99	<a href="#">Jesse Mooney Griffin</a>	112707
100	<a href="#">Michael Mooney</a>	113101
101	<a href="#">Joanne Mooney</a>	113233
102	<a href="#">Caroline Byrne</a>	191825
103	<a href="#">J. P. &amp; M. Doyle Ltd</a>	140434
104	<a href="#">Canoeing Ireland</a>	181738
105	<a href="#">Teresa Parke</a>	181104
106	<a href="#">Kieran Veighey</a>	212615
107	<a href="#">Ryan McGloin</a>	122010
108	<a href="#">Elizabeth Doyle</a>	111644
109	<a href="#">Blessington No. 1 School</a>	112509
110	<a href="#">Carmel Cashin</a>	163114
111	<a href="#">Marian Tutty</a>	180322
112	<a href="#">Laura Querl</a>	190437
113	<a href="#">Glenn Querl</a>	191429
114	<a href="#">Cruise family</a>	122537
115	<a href="#">Neil Tilley</a>	213724
116	<a href="#">Margaret Keogh</a>	000203
117	<a href="#">Ciara McLaughlin</a>	085256
118	<a href="#">National Transport Authority</a>	100315
119	<a href="#">Department of Education</a>	115158
120	<a href="#">Niamh Brophy</a>	082217
121	<a href="#">National Environmental Health Service</a>	124426
122	<a href="#">Nicola Byrne</a>	125823
123	<a href="#">Steven Byrne</a>	125227
124	<a href="#">Blessington Tourist Office</a>	142036
125	<a href="#">Jacqueline Somers</a>	145722
126	<a href="#">Niamh O Toole</a>	150610
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a>	145547
128	<a href="#">Deirdre Grogan</a>	154955
129	<a href="#">Philip Byrne</a>	140555
130	<a href="#">Embankment Plastics</a>	163003
131	<a href="#">Uisce Eireann</a>	163303
132	<a href="#">Noelle Moore</a>	155635
133	<a href="#">Mark McCarville</a>	171908
134	<a href="#">Eimear Deegan</a>	164517
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a>	180552
136	<a href="#">Ventac &amp; Company Limited</a>	181627
137	<a href="#">Marshall Yards Development Company Limited</a>	183806
138	<a href="#">Peter Eustace</a>	183830
139	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a>	190049
140	<a href="#">Luke Timmins</a>	190159
141	<a href="#">Eugene Tyrrell</a>	192751
142	<a href="#">Charlie Johnston</a>	193153
143	<a href="#">Lakeshore Striders</a>	202709



144	<a href="#">Poulaphouca Paddlers</a>	200443
145	<a href="#">Teresa Parke</a>	202810
146	<a href="#">Donal O'Brien</a>	203934
147	<a href="#">Veerle Van der Velpen</a>	203805
148	<a href="#">Maura Robinson</a>	205201
149	<a href="#">N. Foley</a>	210018
150	<a href="#">Lisa Byrne</a>	210403
151	<a href="#">Anne Byrne</a>	210732
152	<a href="#">Lakeside Community Games</a>	212312
153	<a href="#">Dunmoy Properties Ltd</a>	212157
154	<a href="#">Jane Jameson</a>	213348
155	<a href="#">Debbie McCarthy</a>	212222
156	<a href="#">Catherine Broe</a>	212907
157	<a href="#">Terry Gale</a>	214106
158	<a href="#">Christina Browne</a>	212917
159	<a href="#">Colin Browne</a>	215339
160	<a href="#">Peter Harney</a>	215045
161	<a href="#">Catherine Roche</a>	214258
162	<a href="#">Poulaphouca Paddlers</a>	194723
163	<a href="#">Michelle Mooney</a>	220308
164	<a href="#">Kevin Reid</a>	220957
165	<a href="#">Claire Reid</a>	221016
166	<a href="#">Paul Maloney</a>	220548
167	<a href="#">Blessington Allotments Campaign</a>	221637
168	<a href="#">Elaine Mackenzie-Smith</a>	223210
169	<a href="#">Pat O'Sullivan</a>	221745
170	<a href="#">Adam Warren</a>	223943
171	<a href="#">Tina Stacey</a>	231440
172	<a href="#">N McHugh</a>	222050
173	<a href="#">Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications</a>	101115
174	<a href="#">Kelland Homes</a>	101833
175	<a href="#">Lakeside Community Games</a>	103344
176	<a href="#">Jason &amp; John Kelly</a>	102307
177	<a href="#">J. P. &amp; M Doyle Ltd</a>	105309
178	<a href="#">St Brigid's National School</a>	105615
179	<a href="#">Sumanth Varaganti</a>	105431
180	<a href="#">Claire Behan</a>	111853
181	<a href="#">Robert Cummins</a>	114804
182	<a href="#">Joanne Mooney</a>	115608
183	<a href="#">Orna Donoghue</a>	113047
184	<a href="#">Alison Curley</a>	121512
185	<a href="#">Michael O'Mahony</a>	112517
186	<a href="#">Samuel Stack</a>	123217
187	<a href="#">Jonny Mullen</a>	125519
188	<a href="#">Kieran Doyle</a>	123556
189	<a href="#">Bryko Ltd.</a>	130126
190	<a href="#">Laura Daly</a>	132218
191	<a href="#">PD Lane Associates</a>	132647
192	<a href="#">Niall McKeon</a>	134334
193	<a href="#">Noel Gallagher</a>	134622



194	<a href="#">Department of Housing, Local Government &amp; Heritage</a>	140541
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a>	140548
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a>	140503
197	<a href="#">Aoifanna Phibbs</a>	144100
198	<a href="#">Tesco Ireland Limited</a>	152659
199	<a href="#">Office of the Planning Regulator</a>	153626
200	<a href="#">Lise-Marié du Preez</a>	155318
201	<a href="#">Edwina &amp; John Hardy</a>	160233
202	<a href="#">Al Moore</a>	170449
203	<a href="#">Helen O'Shea</a>	162139
204	<a href="#">Derek Keogh</a>	163303
205	<a href="#">Serpents Basketball Academy Blessington</a>	163620
206	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a>	163731
207	<a href="#">Radek Dulny</a>	173746
208	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a>	153614
209	<a href="#">Caitriona Mc Keon</a>	171546
210	<a href="#">Turlough Kinane</a>	170650
211	<a href="#">Naomi Dempsey</a>	173201
212	<a href="#">David Broderick</a>	173025
213	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a>	174017
214	<a href="#">Blessington GAA</a>	180116
215	<a href="#">Orlagh Deegan</a>	180650
216	<a href="#">Ciaran Deegan</a>	183059
217	<a href="#">Lakeshore Striders Athletic Club(LSAC)</a>	184811
218	<a href="#">Sraith Fhada Housing Ltd.</a>	190036
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd</a>	172755
220	<a href="#">Colm Dolan</a>	191615
221	<a href="#">Will Blumlein</a>	190908
222	<a href="#">Poulaphuca Paddlers</a>	200912
223	<a href="#">Margo Griffin</a>	202347
224	<a href="#">Paul Cullen</a>	203806
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a>	204227
226	<a href="#">Peter Doyle</a>	202622
227	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a>	204711
228	<a href="#">Community Pool for West Wicklow</a>	203426
229	<a href="#">Deirdre McCormack</a>	210236
230	<a href="#">Brian Elmes*</a>	210349
231	<a href="#">Adam Cullen</a>	205914
232	<a href="#">Kathleen Elliott</a>	212828
233	<a href="#">Niamh Craul</a>	213207
234	<a href="#">Niamh Craul</a>	214705
235	<a href="#">Patrick Quinn</a>	204850
236	<a href="#">Aine Quinn</a>	222733
237	<a href="#">Cllr Gerry O'Neill</a>	223019
238	<a href="#">Emer Maloney</a>	225409
239	<a href="#">Maggie Schofield</a>	224919
240	<a href="#">Nadia*</a>	230231
241	<a href="#">Karen Brady</a>	230207
242	<a href="#">Cllr.Gerry O'Neill</a>	225429
243	<a href="#">Mary Paton</a>	230751



244	<a href="#">Cllr.Gerry O'Neill</a>	231715
245	<a href="#">Laura McGlade</a>	231435
246	<a href="#">Eamonn Deegan</a>	233007
247	<a href="#">Keith Burke</a>	232311
248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a>	212745
249	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a>	235300
250	<a href="#">Tony Shone</a>	134938
251	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy*</a>	171644
252	<a href="#">Lidl Ireland GmbH</a>	114350
253	<a href="#">OPW</a>	163945



## Section 4 Summary and Assessment of submissions

### Section 4.1 Prescribed Bodies

4.1.1 Office of the Planning Regulator
Item 1 Preamble
<p>The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) wishes to acknowledge the considerable and evident work your authority has put into the preparation of the draft Local Areal Plan.</p> <p>As your authority is aware, a key function of the Office is the assessment of statutory plans to ensure consistency with legislative and policy requirements relating to planning.</p> <p>The Office has evaluated and assessed the draft Local Areal Plan under the provisions of sections 31AO(1) and 31AO(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act) and this submission has been prepared accordingly.</p> <p>The Office's evaluation and assessment has had regard to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (the County Development Plan), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) area, and relevant section 28 guidelines. This submission makes six (6) recommendations and five (5) observations.</p> <p>Recommendations issued by the Office relate to clear breaches of the relevant legislative provisions, of the national or regional policy framework and/or of the policy of Government, as set out in the Ministerial guidelines under section 28. As such, the Wicklow County Council (Planning Authority) is required to implement or address recommendation(s) made by the Office in order to ensure consistency with the relevant policy and legislative provisions.</p> <p>Observations take the form of a request for further information, justification on a particular matter, or clarification regarding particular provisions of a plan on issues that are required to ensure alignment with policy and legislative provisions. The Planning Authority is requested by the Office to action an observation.</p> <p>A submission can include advice on matters that the Office considers would contribute positively to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Planning Authority is requested by the Office to give full consideration to the advice contained in a submission.</p>
Chief Executive Response
Noted



## Item 2 Overview

The Office welcomes the preparation of the draft Local Area Plan and the approach taken by the Planning Authority to focus on the protection of the environment, sustainability and consolidation and regeneration of Blessington town to enhance compact growth, public realm and improve connectivity across the plan area and thereby reduce the car based dependency of the settlement.

Blessington is a Self-Sustaining Growth Town as identified in the RSES for the EMRA. As a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, which has experienced strong commuter focused growth in the past, Blessington has the potential to provide housing for people from across the county and region and to strengthen its employment base and develop it as an important centre of employment due to its strategic location, and the availability of a skilled workforce.

The policy framework set out by the draft Local Areal Plan plays an important role in ensuring the sustainable development and expansion of the settlement over the forthcoming years.

The Office welcomes the focused tourism policy objectives including the support of the future expansion of the Blessington greenway and associated infrastructure and the identification of Opportunity Sites for town centre regeneration including the objectives for public realm improvements, which provide a clear policy basis for tourism development and the activation of town centre regeneration sites.

The draft Local Areal Plan includes the relevant statutory reports including Appropriate Assessment Screening, Strategic Environmental Assessment Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as well as a Social Infrastructure Audit, which are welcomed by the Office.

However, the Office notes that additional fundamental supporting documents such as a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) for lands zoned for New Residential and Employment uses and a Local Transport Plan (LTP) have not been prepared.

The County Development Plan states:

*Detailed 'Infrastructural Assessments' in accordance with NPO 72 and the methodology for a Tiered Approach to Zoning set out under Appendix 3 of the NPF shall be carried out for all lands proposed to be zoned and de-zoned in future Local Area Plans.*

However, no such assessment has been included to support the land use zoning objectives proposed in the draft Local Area Plan. These documents provide the critical evidence-base upon which the draft Local Area Plan is underpinned, as well as supporting rationale for such decisions.

While the Office acknowledges the publishing of a Local Transport Assessment (LTA), as appendix 4 to the draft Local Area Plan, it is of concern that an Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) as per National Transport Authority guidance, has not been carried out to support the preparation of an LTP for the plan area, as required under CPO 12.3 of the County Development Plan.

In addition, the Office also considers that further consideration of the Poulaphouca Reservoir is required to ensure that the reservoir as a drinking water supply is protected and development will not negatively impact this drinking water source.

With the exception of the specific concerns set out below, the draft Local Area Plan otherwise sets out a clear strategy and framework for the future development of the lands concerned. The issues raised below largely focus on supporting the delivery of the vision of the draft Local Area Plan and building on the ambition of the County Development Plan to develop well-serviced, well-connected and sustainable neighbourhoods, and promote sustainable modes of transport.

## Chief Executive Response

### Settlement Capacity Audit / Infrastructure Assessment

There is no statutory obligation for a 'settlement capacity audit' to be carried out for local area plans. It is however accepted that such an exercise can be of assistance in the determination of appropriate location and quantum of



zoning and prioritisation of lands, given the NPF requirements with respect to a 'tiered approach to zoning' which relates to the availability of services.

This exercise has however been carried out, and in some detail, over the last 2 years for Blessington and all towns in the County as part of the RZLT process. This process allowed the Planning Authority to identify lands that are serviced, serviceable, and not serviced. For the Blessington LAP, the information sourced with regard to services across the settlement for the RZLT assessment allowed a draft plan to be crafted wherein only lands that are serviced or serviceable have been proposed for zoning in the draft LAP.

With respect using an SCA to determine potential housing yield data, as clearly expressed in the draft LAP, potential yield has been purposefully not stated in order to allow for flexibility in the application of density, which would only be possible to determine when detailed site specific assessments are completed.

#### **Area Based Transport Assessment / Local Transport Plan**

No ABTA or Local Transport Plan has been prepared as part of this LAP. This is regrettable but technical resources have not been available for this, and it was decided that the lack of such a study should not hold up progress on preparing new LAP. Instead, available internal resources were deployed to carry out a Local Transportation Assessment that did accompany the draft LAP. The CE is satisfied that this assessment did allow for transportation considerations to be fully integrated into the plan development process.

At this stage of plan making, where a period of only 6 weeks is provided for the CE to prepare a report and make recommendations to the members for amendments if necessary, inadequate time would be available to allow for development and production of a Local Transport Plan, of the form and detail as envisaged by the NTA / TII guidance. An LTP can be prepared after the adoption of the LAP and the CE is agreeable to a new objective to this effect.

#### **Poulaphouca Reservoir**

The CE is happy to recommend additional text and objectives to address the issue raised (please Item 9 to follow)

#### **CE Recommendation**

##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

Include new objective in Section B.7:

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



<b>Item 3 Consistency with the Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy</b>
<p>Blessington is located within the Eastern and Midlands Region and is identified as a Self- Sustaining Growth Town in the RSES. The RSES recognises that Blessington is one of the towns which has recorded the highest growth rates in the country in the last ten years with lower levels of employment provision, which is nevertheless an important employment and service centre.</p> <p>As a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, the RSES prioritises contained growth, focusing on driving investment in services, employment growth and infrastructure whilst balancing housing delivery.</p> <p>Overall, the Office is satisfied that the provisions of the draft Local Area Plan are broadly consistent with the RSES.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted

<b>Item 4 Consistency with development plan and core strategy</b>
<p>Section 19(2) of the Act requires a local area plan to be consistent with the objectives of the development plan and its core strategy. This requirement also applies under section 20(5) of the Act.</p> <p>Section A.2 of the draft Local Area Plan sets out the vision and strategy of the draft Local Area Plan and how it complies with the core strategy of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>The core strategy allocates a projected population increase of 1,079 with a corresponding housing supply target of 514 units to 2031.</p> <p>The Office considers that the strategy set out in the draft Local Area Plan in respect of the delivery of these targets is generally consistent with the County Development Plan, except where otherwise specified below.</p> <p>The Office is also satisfied that the overall approach in the draft Local Area Plan promotes compact growth and sequential development, and regeneration within the town centre is generally consistent with the strategic objectives and Settlement Strategy Objective CPO 4.1 of the County Development Plan.</p> <p>The Office recognises that the draft Local Area Plan relates to the lands within the Planning Authority's jurisdiction and that it is a priority of the County Development Plan and draft Local Area Plan to ensure that any plans prepared for the town are undertaken in consultation with Kildare County Council to provide a strategy for the sustainable development of the town and its hinterland as a whole, irrespective of county borders.</p> <p>As such, the Planning Authority should consider illustrating the Blessington Environs lands on the maps accompanying the draft Local Area Plan to ensure that the strategy for the sustainable development of the town and its hinterland as a whole, irrespective of county borders, is understood and to ensure that supporting infrastructure delivery for the town and the immediate surrounding area is coordinated in a sustainable and comprehensive manner.</p>
<b>Observation 1 – Blessington Environs</b>
<p>Having regard to section 4.2 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 and section A2.2 of the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 (the draft Local Area Plan), the Planning Authority is requested to consider illustrating the Blessington Environs lands on the maps accompanying the draft Local Area Plan to ensure that the strategy for the sustainable development of the town and its hinterland as a whole, irrespective of county borders, is understood and to ensure that supporting infrastructure delivery for the town and the immediate surrounding area is coordinated in a sustainable and comprehensive manner.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
The zoning provisions of the Kildare County Development plan, as they relate to Blessington can be shown on the plan maps.
<b>CE Recommendation</b>
Amend Map 1 to include zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development Plan.



### **Item 5 Residential Development Strategy**

Chapter 4 of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) (the Development Plans Guidelines) outlines the approach for zoning that should be followed by planning authorities.

The Planning Authority proposes to zone 49ha for new residential development. In determining the land area required to accommodate projected growth, the Office notes that Residential Use is also considered an appropriate use on lands identified as Town Centre and Mixed Use zonings.

The Office welcomes the zoning objectives for New Residential Priority 1 lands which will facilitate the compact and sustainable growth of the town in a sequential manner, and the clear policy approach in respect of phasing the development of zoned land in accordance with the sequential approach.

However, it is not clear whether infrastructure capacity exists or will be delivered over the plan period as no Infrastructure Assessment / SCA has been included in the draft Local Area Plan. It is critical that lands zoned as New Residential Priority 1 and / or Priority 2 are evaluated on this basis and to demonstrate either Tier 1 or Tier 2 status for these undeveloped lands consistent with RPO 4.2 of the RSES and CPO 4.1 of the County Development Plan to align the settlement / core strategy to infrastructure delivery.

#### **Recommendation 1 – Co-ordination of housing delivery and infrastructure**

**Having regard to the provision of new homes at locations that can support compact growth and sustainable development and the co-ordination of housing delivery and infrastructure, and in particular to:**

- **RPO 4.2 of the RSES to align the settlement strategy to infrastructure investment;**
- **Policy Objective CPO 4.1 of the County Development Plan to implement the core strategy having regard to the availability of services and infrastructure; and**
- **the policy and objective for zoned land to be informed by a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) under section 6.2.1 of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022),**

**the Planning Authority is required to:**

- (i) prepare an SCA and engage with the relevant statutory bodies to identify that the lands zoned for New Residential are serviceable within the plan period; and**
- (ii) review the zoning objectives to ensure that lands that cannot be reasonably or cost effectively delivered within the plan period are not zoned for development.**

#### **Chief Executive Response**

The CE is satisfied that:

- all lands zoned for town centre and infill development in existing developed areas are serviced
- all lands zoned for Priority 1 New Residential are serviced
- All lands zoned for Priority 2 New Residential are either serviced or serviceable.

In this regard, there are no deficiencies in the capacity of water supply or wastewater treatment infrastructure for any of the lands zoned for new development in the plan area during the plan period. With respect to transportation services, all zoned lands are serviced or can be serviced by roads, footpaths, cycleways and public lighting. In addition, all lands proposed to be zoned are within a 15 minutes' walk of a bus service, as detailed in the Local Transport Assessment appendix.

Therefore it is not considered necessary for an SCA to be prepared at this stage of plan making.

#### **CE Recommendation**

No change.



## Item 5 Transport and Accessibility

The Office recognises that the LTA, as prepared, sets out useful information and objectives regarding transport infrastructure and can form the basis for the main elements of an LTP to support the draft Local Areal Plan.

However, as outlined in CPO 12.3 of the County Development Plan, LTPs are to be prepared for towns, including Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, and should be prepared incorporating ABTA methodologies, to inform land use and investment decisions, including the preparation of local area plans.

Given Blessington's role as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, having the main elements of an LTP integrated into the draft Local Area Plan will be critical to support the sustainable development of the plan area and the achievement of national climate action targets.

The Office therefore recommends that the LTA and the draft Local Areal Plan are revised to reflect the main LTP requirements of the RSES with respect to the items outlined below.

The tables presented in section 1 of the LTA highlight that active travel and public transport mode shares for travelling to work, have not shown any significant increase from 2011 to 2022, with the overall number of people using active modes declining. For example, there is particularly low cycle usage among secondary school students in Blessington. The LTA notes this is concerning given the increase in investment in these modes over the last decade. It is recognised that a greater uptake of active and sustainable modes is needed to enable the achievement of mandatory climate action targets to reduce emissions by 51% by 2030, as required under national climate action targets and as set out in section 4.3 of the Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (Wicklow CAP).

Having clear modal shift ambitions will be important to achieving these targets. The Office notes however that mode share targets have not been included in the LTA nor the draft Local Areal Plan and it is recommended that ambitious but realistic mode share targets are proposed together with an effective monitoring programme.

A key function of LTPs, as set out under the RPO 8.1 of the RSES, is to ensure the integration of land use and transport planning at local level. The Office is concerned that the LTA does not include an adequate focus on the connectivity needs of the emerging development areas listed as Specific Local Objectives (SLO). While the SLO Concept Plans do give indicative connectivity details at site level, there is no detail on connectivity to the wider network and any deficiencies that may exist. The LTA should include an assessment in this regard with recommendations for improvements highlighted and incorporated into the objectives of the draft Local Area Plan.

The Office welcomes the inclusion of the Active Travel Strategy Map No. 6 in the draft Local Area Plan, and recommends that the inclusion of key development areas on this map will assist in understanding the delivery of the emerging active travel network for the plan area.

The Office notes that the Transport Strategy Map No. 5 and SLO3 and SLO4 indicate that these lands would be accessed from the N81 / Blessington Main Street within the 80km/hour speed limit zone. It is important therefore to highlight that access associated with the development of these lands is required to comply with Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) and all relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland Publications.

### Recommendation 2 - Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

**Having regard to the provision of a sustainable Transport Strategy and the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and in particular to:**

- **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 2024, 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);**
- **RPO 8.1 and RPO 8.4 of the RSES for the integration of land use and transport planning;**
- **RPO 8.6 of the RSES to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for selected settlements in the region;**



- sustainable mobility objectives CPO 12.1, CPO 12.2 and CPO 12.3 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;
- public transport objectives CPO 12.20 and CPO 12.21 of the County Development Plan; and
- national road objectives CPO 12.40 of the County Development Plan,

the Planning Authority is required to:

- (i) review the current Local Transport Assessment (LTA) in consultation with the National Transport Authority, to provide an LTP, closely aligned with the updated Area Based Transport Assessment guidance;
- (ii) revise the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 (the draft Local Area Plan) to incorporate the measures and proposed modal networks of the LTA / LTP and include policy support for the proposed interventions together with clear mapping of all measures on the Transport Strategy Map No. 5 and Active Travel Strategy Map No. 6;
- (iii) include key development areas on the Active Travel Strategy Map No. 6 assist in understanding the delivery of the emerging active travel network for the plan area;
- (iv) amend the draft Local Area Plan to include mode share targets and an effective monitoring programme; and
- (v) ensure that all future access proposals to serve zoned lands at SLO3 and SLO4 comply with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) and are in compliance with all relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland Publications.

#### Chief Executive Response

##### Local Transport Plan

At this stage of plan making, where a period of only 6 weeks is provided for the CE to prepare a report and make recommendations to the members for amendments if necessary, inadequate time would be available to allow for development and production of a Local Transport Plan, of the form and detail as envisaged by the RSES or NTA / TII guidance. As set out in the response to the suggestion from the NTA in its submission, a LTP can be prepared after the adoption of the LAP and the CE is agreeable to a new objective to this effect.

##### Policy support / mapping of transport measures

The CE is generally satisfied that the LAP objectives and the transport strategy maps identify the transport improvements detailed in the LTA text; however, further enhancement can be made to give more detail of active travel measures and projects – both those already in train and desired future projects, where known. At this stage of plan making, given the time limits involved, it would not be possible to carry out fresh survey, evaluation and determination of significant or nascent additional transportation measures that might be necessary in the settlement. The CE is committed to such assessment being undertaken as part of the development of a LTP for the plan area. With respect to significant development areas (SLO areas) these will be added to the 2 transport objectives maps to show connectivity.

##### Modal Share Targets

This is a matter that has also been raised by the NTA but no advice has been offered by the OPR or NTA as to how these targets may be calculated, and it is not considered rational or reasonable to come up with arbitrary modal share targets as part of this plan making process. This is a matter that can be considered in the future LTP.

##### SLO3/SLO4 and Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities

It is intended that on the completion of the BIRR, that the speed limit from the new roundabout at the northern end of the BIRR on the N81 and the existing southern roundabout at Blessington Industrial Estate, will be reduced as traffic not bound for Blessington is diverted onto the BIRR. This will allow for significant town centre / public realm / public transport improvements to be carried out in Blessington.

With respect to SLO3, these lands which are currently in quarry use, already access directly onto the N81. It is the objective of this plan that these lands, following rehabilitation, may be suitable for additional forms of development including general employment / enterprise and a public amenity park. It is intended that general vehicular traffic associated with such uses would access the public road network via the BIRR but that HGVs should continue to access



the road network onto the N81, as they do currently.

As indicated in the draft Plan, it is intended that SLO4 will be serviced by a new link road from the new N81 roundabout (to be developed as part of the BIRR) to the Kilbride Road. Only cyclist / pedestrian traffic is indicated as desired from SLO3 onto the current N81.

Any concerns that arise with respect to interactions of these SLOs with the N81 can be addressed in appropriate detail in the future LTP and indeed in any future planning applications that may be made for these lands. In addition, additional text may be added to the plan to address the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

## **CE Recommendation**

### **Section B.7 Infrastructure**

Include new objective in LAP

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

Amend objectives as follows:

**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.*

### **Section B.8 Zoning**

#### **Specific Local Objectives (SLO)**

*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.*

#### **Amend Transport Objectives Maps as follows:**

- Add additional information on active travel projects
- Add SLO areas
- Add OP sites



## **Item 6 Flood Risk Management**

The Office welcomes the preparation of the SFRA and approach taken to the Plan Making Justification Tests (Justification Tests) to inform the policies and objectives of the draft Local Areal Plan which is of a very high standard. The Office welcomes the discussion on flood risk and climate change in section 5 of the SFRA, and the inclusion of future scenario extents on the flood zone mapping, and also acknowledges and supports the identification of flood risk zones on map no 4. However, these have not been overlaid on the land use zoning maps. It is difficult therefore to fully understand the implications of flood risk across the plan area, and the Planning Authority is advised to overlay the future scenario mapping on the land use zoning maps in order to provide clarity on areas at risk from climate change.

In line with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) the Office considers that the Planning Authority needs to give further consideration to three specific sites, as set out below.

Firstly, in consideration of future flood risks in the preparation of the draft Local Area Plan the Office notes that an area zoned for highly vulnerable New Residential – Priority 1 use at Oak Drive, Blessington Demesne East, is shown as at risk in both the mid-range and high-end future flood risk scenarios. The Office considers that specific local objectives are necessary to be included in the draft Local Area Plan to provide detail on how risk to this area will be mitigated, such as by avoiding development in areas potentially prone to flooding in the future, providing space for future flood defences, specifying minimum floor levels and setting specific development management objectives.

Secondly, in respect of the portion of the site zoned as Tourism on the land use zoning objective map no. 1 and identified as site i(b) in the Justification Tests, the Office notes that the zoning objective provides for vulnerable and highly vulnerable uses such as tourism accommodation. Given that the site fails the Justification Tests, the Office considers that a specific local objective is necessary to limit appropriate uses to those compatible with the specific flood risk and Tourism zoning objective.

Finally, in applying the sequential approach to flood risk, undeveloped lands are zoned for Community and Education use within Flood Zone B at Oak Drive. This zoning objective allows for highly vulnerable development such as schools and nursing homes. As it is not clear if the sequential approach to flood risk has been applied i.e. the consideration of avoidance and substitution in the first instance, nor whether a plan-making Justification Tests has been prepared and passed. As such, the Office considers that the Planning Authority should provide an analysis of these lands within the SFRA.

### **Recommendation 3 – Flood Risk Management**

**Having regard to flood risk management, and in particular,**

- **RPO 7.12 of the RSES to avoid inappropriate land use zonings and development in areas of risk of flooding in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines;**
- **Strategic County Outcome SCO 7 to restrict development in areas that are at risk of flooding, and Policy Objectives CPO 14.06 of the County Development Plan to implement the guidelines of Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) (Flood Guidelines), of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028; and**
- **the Flood Guidelines,**

**the Planning Authority is required to:**

- (i) overlay the flood zones maps and future scenario maps with the land use zoning maps in the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025; and**
- (ii) amend the draft Local Area Plan and / or Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to:**
  - (a) include specific local objectives to provide detail on how risk to the area zoned for highly vulnerable New Residential – Priority 1 use at Oak Drive, Blessington Demesne East will be mitigated;**
  - (b) include a specific local objective for lands zoned Tourism at the lakeshore to limit existing development to minor development only as outlined in section 5.28 of the Flood Guidelines and new development to water compatible uses in Flood Zone A and less vulnerable uses in Flood Zone B; and**
  - (c) apply the sequential approach to lands zoned for Community and Education use at Oak Drive,**



and if appropriate include a Plan Making Justification Test for lands which overlap with Flood Zone B. Where the Justification Test is not passed the lands should be rezoned for water compatible use or substitute for a land use appropriate to the level of flood risk.

**The Planning Authority should consult with the Office of Public Works regarding this recommendation.**

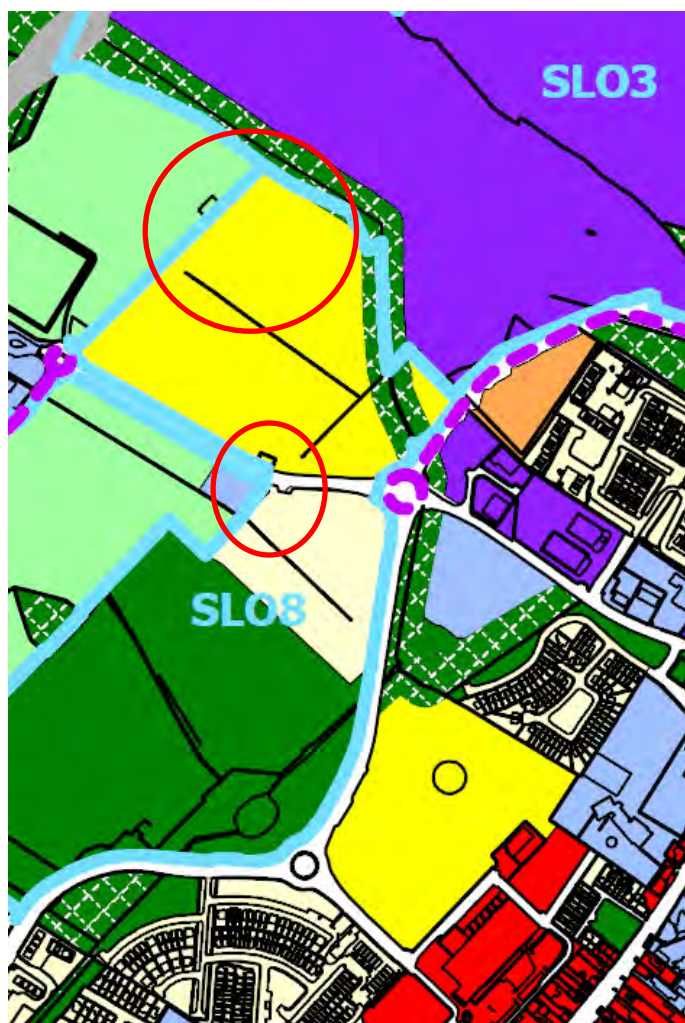
#### **Chief Executive Response**

- (i) The SFRA prepared overlays the flood risk maps and the zoning maps throughout the assessment. However if this is not sufficiently clear, additional maps can be provided.
- (ii) In accordance with advice from the OPW, future flood risk scenario mapping should not be used as a determinant of zoning in the SFRA – only the 'present day' Flood Zones are used in this assessment. However, where flood risk is identified in future scenario mapping, the OPW advises that consideration should be given in the preparation of plans to avoiding development in such areas, providing space for future defences, specifying minimum floor levels and setting specific development management objectives.

(a) Oak Drive – RN1

There are two sites zoned RN1 at Oak Drive.

With respect to the more northerly site, no lands that are identified as at risk in a future scenario are zoned for residential development – they are zoned 'open space'. With respect to the more southerly site, a small area is identified as being at 'present day' risk and these lands are zoned open space'. However, there are lands proposed to be zoned for residential development located in the 'worst case' future flood risk scenario.



The draft LAP objectives already provide that where land is zoned for development, but future scenario flood



mapping indicates a risk of flooding, a site specific flood risk assessment will be required. This objective can however be strengthened to address the concerns raised.

(b) Lakeshore – Tourism

The area zoned 'T-Tourism' at the lakeshore that is in an area identified at risk of flooding comprises only a narrow path and a jetty. These lands are already developed for these uses, which are water compatible, and could not be developed for vulnerable development like tourism accommodation given their size and configuration. Therefore no change is considered warranted.

(c) Oak Drive – CE

The zoning of CE lands at this location, on the south side of Oak Drive has been amended significantly from the previous plan; in the previous plan these lands were fully zoned 'E – Employment' whereas the new draft plan shows the lands zoned for the mixture of open space and CE – Community & Education. The OS zones cover the area at 'present day' flood risk. No part of the CE zone is within the 'present day' flood risk but is in the 'worst case' future scenario risk area. The draft LAP objectives already provide that where land is zoned for development, but future scenario flood mapping indicates a risk of flooding, a site specific flood risk assessment will be required. This objective can however be strengthened to address the concerns raised.



## CE Recommendation

### 1. 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

### 2. Amend the following objective:

#### **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 SFRA.~~

~~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.



## **Item 7 Economy and Employment**

The Office welcomes the economic development strategy set out in section B.3 of the draft Local Area Plan, which aligns with the role of the town as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town consistent with the RSES and County Development Plan policy objectives.

The County Wicklow Economic Development Hierarchy identifies that Blessington's economic function is to attract inward investment through foreign direct and local investment and people and product intensive industries. To support and grow the economic activity in the settlement, 44.2ha of undeveloped land has been zoned for Employment uses in the draft Local Area Plan, of which the majority is identified as SLO3 lands to the north of the settlement.

In terms of consistency with regional planning policy, the Office considers it critical that the draft Local Area Plan does not zone lands for employment uses which are not serviced and are poorly served by public transport consistent with RPO 4.2 of the RSES and SCO 5 of the County Development Plan.

In this regard, the Office is concerned that there is no robust rationale underpinning the location and extent of each zoned site in the draft Local Area Plan for employment purposes. As set out at section 6.2.5 of the Development Plans Guidelines, an evidence-based approach to zoning for employment development is a critical part of the County Development Plan preparation process.

It is also unclear that all of the lands zoned for Employment are serviceable within the plan period and/or that their development is integrated with the timely delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure connections to support the modal shift to active modes contrary to RPO 8.1 of the RSES and CPO 9.6 of the County Development Plan.

Finally, the draft Local Area Plan does not outline how it has applied the guiding principles to identify locations for strategic employment development as required by RPO 6.1 of the RSES and the guiding principles for the integration of land use and transport planning as required by RPO 8.1 of the RSES.

### **Recommendation 4 - Economy and Employment**

**Having regard to the provision of an evidence-based employment strategy, and the location of employment in areas that can support more sustainable transport options, and in particular to:**

- **RPO 4.2 of the RSES to require employment development to be planned in collaboration with infrastructure providers to ensure adequate capacity for services is available;**
- **RPO 6.1 of the RSES to apply the Guiding Principles to Identify Locations for Strategic Employment;**
- **RPO 8.1 of the RSES for the integration of transport and land use planning consistent with the guiding principles of the RSES transport strategy;**
- **SCO 5 of the County Development Plan to support the integration of land use and transportation to encourage a sustainable mobility;**
- **Objective CPO 9.6 of the County Development Plan to promote the development of employment generating uses at locations which comply with sustainable transportation objectives of the County Development Plan; and**
- **the policy and objective of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) under section 6.2.1 for zoning to be informed by a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA), and section 6.2.5 for the provision of an evidence and rationale underpinning the zoning of land for employment purposes,**

**the Planning Authority is required to:**

- (i) provide robust justification and appropriate phasing for the extent and location of Employment zoned land and demonstrate that the criteria of the aforementioned national and regional policies have been satisfied specifically in respect of the following undeveloped Employment lands:**
  - (a) SLO 3 (current/former quarry lands)**
  - (b) N81 South (adjacent to the waste water treatment plant); and**
- (ii) demonstrate by way of an Infrastructure Assessment / SCA that lands zoned for employment are realistically serviceable within the plan period.**



**Where an evidence-based rationale consistent with the above cannot be provided for these, or any other Employment zonings, the subject zoning objective should be removed from the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.**

#### **Chief Executive Response**

The CE is satisfied that the draft LAP provides for an appropriate amount of employment zoned land. Attention is drawn to the fact that no increase in employment zoning is proposed compared to the previous plan and no new areas previously not zoned for such use are proposed in the draft plan. The amount of zoned employment land has in fact been reduced overall by changes in zoning at some locations to more appropriate uses, including identifying additional lands active open space and for the protection of watercourses and biodiversity.

In light of the concerns raised by the OPR, the CE has undertaken a review of all proposed employment lands with respect to services / serviceability. For all zones lands are either partially developed or serviced / serviceable within the lifetime of the plan and therefore would be illogical to 'de-zone'. A wide range of site options are essential in order to attract new employers to the area, and achieving the sustainability and employment growth goals for Blessington as envisaged by the RSES and County Development Plan would not benefit from the de-zoning of already zoned and serviced / serviceable employment land. In particular:

<b>Undeveloped Employment Lands</b>	<b>Assessment of suitability</b>
SLO3	<p>These lands are in use for quarrying activities and are currently zoned for new employment use. It is envisaged that these lands would become suitable for alternative employment use when they have been rehabilitated to a condition that supports new development, which is likely to be a more medium to long term programme. The extent of the employment zoning within the quarrying site has been reduced compared to the previous plan however with the more easterly portion changed to more appropriate OS use. In addition, lands along a watercourse on the southern boundary of this zone have also been changed to OS use.</p> <p>Water supply and wastewater infrastructure are available in the area, as is access to public roads and existing public transport services.</p> <p>Employment use comprises the most appropriate use for these lands in the future given the current use, current condition, surrounding land uses and proximity to the N81. Given that the lands are already in active commercial use and are serviced, de-zoning is not considered reasonable.</p>
Mart	<p>These lands are already developed and are in use as a Mart. The lands are currently zoned for new employment use. The extent of the zoning has been significantly reduced however with the northern and eastern portions changed to more appropriate OS uses.</p> <p>Water supply and wastewater infrastructure are available in the area, as is access to public roads and existing public transport services.</p>
Oak Drive	<p>The majority of these lands are already developed and are located centrally in the settlement. Opportunities would be available for additional infill employment development.</p> <p>Water supply and wastewater infrastructure are available in the area, as is access to public roads and existing public transport services.</p>
Blessington Industrial Estate	<p>The majority of these lands are already developed and are located centrally in the settlement. Opportunities would be available for additional infill employment development.</p> <p>Water supply and wastewater infrastructure are available in the area, as is access to public roads and existing public transport services.</p>
N81 (north of WWTP)	<p>The lands are currently zoned for new employment use. The extent of the zoning has been slightly expanded from the previous plan in that a previous objective to reserve a portion of the lands for a 'park-and-ride' has been removed. These lands are surrounded by existing development on all sides, are across the road from the main employment area in the town (Blessington Industrial Estate) and are within the 60kph speed limit area.</p> <p>Water supply and wastewater infrastructure are available in the area, as is access to public roads and existing public transport services.</p> <p>Having regard to the fact that other than SLO3, most employment land in the settlement is already or partially developed, it is considered essential to provide for some greenfield lands for future new employment development. These lands are considered optimal for this use given the surrounding land uses, servicing status and proximity to the N81 / town centre. De-zoning is therefore not considered justified.</p>

#### **CE Recommendation**

No change



## Item 8 Town Centre Regeneration

The Office welcomes the inclusion of Section B.1 on Town Centre Regeneration in the draft Local Area Plan for Blessington. The Opportunity Sites identified have the potential to act as a regenerative catalyst to increasing the residential, economic and leisure potential of the town centre, while also addressing vacancy, derelict buildings and enhancing the vibrancy of the town centre.

It is important that the draft Local Area Plan facilitates and prioritises the regeneration of the town centre through appropriate active land management objectives and policies, in accordance with the government's Town Centre First, A Policy Approach for Irish Towns (2022) (Town Centre First). It should also identify the critical measures and/or actions the Planning Authority will implement, having regard to public funding available under, among others, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and Town Centre First funds (e.g. Croí Cónaithe).

### Recommendation 5 - Town Centre Regeneration

**Having regard to the vitality, viability and regeneration of Blessington, and in particular to:**

- **RSO2 of the RSES to promote regeneration by making better use of under- utilised land and buildings within the existing built up urban footprint;**
- **RPO 4.26 of the RSES to achieve compact growth;**
- **RPO 8.1 of the RSES to ensure the integration of land use and transport planning; and**
- **Policy Objectives CPO 4.9 and CPO 5.1 of the County Development Plan to target the reversal of town and village centre decline through sustainable compact growth to deliver sustainable regeneration outcomes and to protect and maintain the viability of town and village centres,**

**the Planning Authority is required to:**

- (i) **provide a framework for prioritising and phasing of the town centre Opportunity Sites with an emphasis on delivery during the lifetime of the plan and potential funding streams;**
- (ii) **provide additional guidance in relation to density and building heights via the Opportunity Site Objectives BLESS OP1- BLESS OP8 and / or on the Concept Parameters and Access Plans / Sketches Figures B.1.3.- B.1.11;**
- (iii) **include measurable targets for the reduction of vacancy for the plan period and a strategy for the monitoring of same; and**
- (iv) **include permeability measures on the Transport Strategy Map No.5 and Active Travel Strategy Map No.6 to ensure that the Opportunity Sites are connected to planned active travel infrastructure.**

### Chief Executive Response

- (i) While it would be possible to attach a phasing / priority to each Opportunity Site in the plan area, it would be difficult to link that to delivery or potential funding streams when (a) delivery will be highly dependent on the private sector given that all sites are either fully or partially in private ownership and (b) as future funding streams under national / local programmes e.g. under URDF / RRDF are not known at this time. It should also be noted that the TCF plan, from which the majority of the OP sites are derived, does not assign a property / phasing on these sites. Please see recommended amendment below.
- (ii) It is not considered necessary or appropriate to provide guidance on density and building height for any sites in the plan as these are matters that would fall to be determined at development management stage, in accordance with the objectives of the Wicklow CDP and the various SPPRs and Ministerial guidelines addressing these matters. The OP sites are located in the town centre, surrounded by an existing wide variety of styles, height and uses, and it is not considered appropriate at this stage of plan making, without detailed consideration of these surroundings, to predetermine what design might be suitable. In addition, the draft plan also states:

#### **Development Potential & Density**

*In addition to the objectives of the County Development Plan and this Local Area Plan, the development potential of any site will be subject to determination of appropriate density at the development management stage. The application of density ranges will be considered in line with the objectives of the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and relevant Planning Guidelines. Density ranges should be based on consideration of centrality*



and accessibly to services and public transport; and considerations of character, amenity and the natural environment. As the density that may be possible to achieve on any given site cannot be pre-determined, this plan will not include an estimate of housing yield for any particular area / site.

and

### **Zoning Objectives**

Whilst the land-use zoning will give an indication of the acceptability or otherwise of particular uses in particular areas, proposed development will also be assessed in terms of compatibility with the development control guidelines and standards outlined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and this plan. Factors such as density, height, massing, traffic generation, public health regulations, design criteria, visual amenity, availability of services and potential nuisance by way of noise, odour and air pollution are also of importance in establishing whether or not a development proposal conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area.

- (iii) As part of the preparation of the LAP, the TCF and the RZLT maps, town centre surveys have been undertaken and record vacancy and building uses at a given point in time. It will be possible to measure changes periodically against the 2023 – 2024 surveys, in particular through the addition or deletion of sites to the RZLT maps which is an annual programme. However it is not considered appropriate to include a specific target for vacancy reduction, particularly when the majority of sites are in the private ownership and the Local Authority would have limited tools available to bring such properties back into use. The Local Authority will however continue to utilise routes available e.g. under the Derelict Sites Act, to address dereliction and vacancy.
- (iv) All of the OP sites are located within the town centre and are therefore already serviced by footpaths and are within 5 minutes' walk of public transport services. However there is no issue with them being identified on the transport strategy maps.

### **CE Recommendation**

**Amend the plan as follows:**

#### **Section B.1 Town Centre Regeneration**

##### **Blessington 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. 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.*

##### **Transport Strategy Maps**

Add OP sites



<b>Item 9 Climate Action</b>
<p>The Office welcomes the strategic goals of the draft Local Area Plan with healthy place-making, climate change and economic opportunity at the core. Key features of a low carbon town include: land use, movement and transport, energy and natural heritage, and inclusive communities.</p> <p>There is, however, an opportunity for the draft Local Area Plan to include more specific policy measures and actions to give effect to and complement the objectives and actions of the Wicklow CAP which are specific to Blessington and have a strong relationship to planning, such as transport and the built environment. For example, the inclusion of mode share targets and flood relief schemes.</p> <p><b>Observation 2 – Integrating Climate Action</b></p> <p><b>Having regard to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>RPO 3.7 of the RSES;</b></li> <li>▪ <b>the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended, mandatory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51%; and</b></li> <li>▪ <b>the Wicklow Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (Wicklow CAP),</b></li> </ul> <p><b>the Planning Authority is advised to review and revise the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 (the draft Local Area Plan) to:</b></p> <p><b>(i) provide for alignment between the draft Local Area Plan and the relevant climate adaptation and mitigation actions of the Wicklow CAP through the policy objectives; and</b></p> <p><b>(ii) include additional and more specific climate action policy objectives which relate to policy measures and actions in respect of transport and the built environment.</b></p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>Local Area Plans sit below the County Development Plan in the hierarchy of planning policy; the provisions of the County Development Plan will apply directly in the LAP area, and the provisions of the LAP must be consistent with the County Development Plan. The CE is satisfied that the very wide range of objectives set out in the County Development Plan, that will apply in the plan area, fully address the concerns raised in this point, and fully address the objectives of the <b>Wicklow Climate Action Plan</b>. For example, the following objectives relating to sustainable transportation, water protection and management, flood risk management and air quality control etc will apply in the plan area:</p> <p><b>Sustainable Transportation Objectives</b> CPO 12.1 CPO 12.2 CPO 12.5 CPO 12.6 CPO 12.7 CPO 12.8 CPO 12.11 CPO 12.12 CPO 12.13 CPO 12.14 CPO 12.15 CPO 12.16 CPO 12.17 CPO 12.18 CPO 12.19 CPO 12.20 CPO 12.21 CPO 12.22 CPO 12.23 CPO 12.25 CPO 12.26 CPO 12.27 CPO 12.28 CPO 12.29 CPO 12.33 CPO 12.59 CPO 12.62 CPO 12.63</p> <p><b>Water Protection &amp; Management Objectives</b> CPO13.1 CPO13.2 CPO13.3 CPO13.4 CPO 13.5 CPO 13.6 CPO13.7 CPO 13.14 CPO 13.20 CPO 13.21 CPO 13.22</p> <p><b>Flood Risk Management objectives</b> CPO 14.01 CPO14.02 CPO14.03 CPO 14.04 CPO14.05 CPO 14.06 CPO 14.08 CPO 14.09 CPO 14.10 CPO 14.11 CPO 14.12 CPO 14.13 CPO 14.14 CPO 14.15 CPO 14.16</p> <p><b>Air Quality objectives</b> CPO 15.9 CPO 15.10 CPO 15.11</p> <p>In addition, the draft LAP includes the following additional policies and objectives which address compact development, biodiversity resilience, active travel, sustainable economic development as well as climate action co-benefits and environmental protection requirements. <a href="#">Sections A2-A4, BLESS3, BLESS5, BLESS6, BLESS8, BLESS11, BLESS13, BLESS14, BLESS26, BLESS31, BLESS32, BLESS33, BLESS34, BLESS35, BLESS36, BLESS37, BLESS38, BLESS39, BLESS40, BLESS41, BLESS42, BLESS43, BLESS44, BLESS45, BLESS46, BLESS47, BLESS48, BLESS49, BLESS50, BLESS51, BLESS52.</a></p> <p>Therefore no changes are recommended.</p>
<b>CE Recommendation</b>
No change



## **Item 10 Environment, Heritage & Amenity**

### **Water Quality (Poulaphouca Reservoir)**

The Office notes that the draft Local Area Plan recognises the important environmental, amenity and tourism value of the Poulaphouca Reservoir, and includes associated objectives.

As the Poulaphouca Reservoir also supplies drinking water to a significant proportion of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), the Office considers that protecting and enhancing the water quality of the reservoir is critical to managing this essential water resource. As such, this should be highlighted in the draft Local Area Plan to ensure consistency with RSES and County Development Plan policy objectives.

In this regard, while objective BLESS42 provides for applications for development to demonstrate that they would not individually nor cumulatively affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, the draft Local Area Plan does not provide specific protection nor recognition of the Poulaphouca Reservoir as a public drinking water resource.

The Office considers that the Planning Authority should include a new section and associated objective in the Local Area Plan to protect the reservoir as a drinking water supply and ensure development will not negatively impact this drinking water source. The new section should highlight the importance of Poulaphouca Reservoir as a major source of drinking water for the GDA, including reference to Uisce Éireann's statutory role in assessing risks to the reservoir, and how the implementation of nature based solutions will help to manage the water quality of surface water run-off collected and discharged directly to the reservoir or to watercourses which drain into it.

In addition, reference should be made to the recently published Local Authority Waters Programme's Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents (2024).

### **Recommendation 6 – Poulaphouca Reservoir Water Quality**

**Having regard to the proximity of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and the provision of sustainable infrastructure and nature based water management solutions, in particular to:**

- **RPO 7.12 of the RSES to integrate sustainable water management solutions to create safe places;**
- **RPO 10.1 of the RSES to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment;**
- **RPO 10.15 of the RSES to improve storm water infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage; and**
- **policy objectives CPO 13.1, 13.9, 13.20, CPO 13.21, 13.22, 14.13, and**
- **17.24 of the County Development Plan to ensure the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, surface water run-off is managed for maximum benefit, and to promote the use of green infrastructure,**

**the Planning Authority is required to:**

- (i) include a new section of text to highlight:**
  - (a) the importance of Poulaphouca reservoir as a drinking water resource for the Greater Dublin Area;**
  - (b) the importance of protecting the reservoir as a drinking water supply; and**
  - (c) the Local Authority Waters Programme's Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents (2024) relevant guidance; and**
- (ii) include associated objective(s) to:**
  - (a) protect the Poulaphouca Reservoir as a drinking water supply;**
  - (b) ensure development will not negatively impact Poulaphouca Reservoir as a drinking water source;**
  - (c) support and facilitate the improvement of the quality of surface water runoff that directly (or indirectly) will reach the Poulaphouca Reservoir; and**
  - (d) support Uisce Éireann's statutory role in assessing risks to the reservoir.**

**The Planning Authority should consult with the Uisce Éireann regarding this recommendation.**



## Chief Executive Response

The protection of drinking water sources across the County is addressed in the objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan, which were drafted in consultation with Uisce Eireann. These objectives will apply directly in the Blessington LAP area.

**CPO13.1** *To ensure and support the implementation of the EU Groundwater Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin and Sub-Basin Management Plans and Blue Dot Catchment Programme, to ensure the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters in the County, including rivers, lakes, ground water, coastal and estuarine waters, and to restrict development likely to lead to a deterioration in water quality. The Council will also have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.*

**CPO13.2** *To prevent development that would pollute water bodies and in particular, to regulate the installation of effluent storage and disposal systems in the vicinity of natural water bodies or development that would exacerbate existing underlying water contamination.*

**CPO 13.9** *To protect existing and potential water resources of the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the Groundwater Protection Scheme and source protection plans for public water supplies.*

**CPO 13.15** *In order to fulfil the objectives of the Core Strategy, Wicklow County Council will work alongside and facilitate the delivery of Irish Water's **Water Services Investment Programme**, to ensure that all lands zoned or identified for development are serviced by an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system and in particular, to endeavour to secure the delivery of regional and strategic wastewater schemes.*

*In particular, to support and facilitate the delivery of new / improved wastewater treatment plants in the following settlements:*

- Arklow
- Blessington
- Aughrim
- Tinahely
- Avoca
- Laragh – Glendalough
- Lakes area around Blessington
- Large and Small Villages

These objectives are supported by 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.'*

It is noted that Uisce Eireann in its submission has noted the County Development Plan objectives above and has requested the following objectives be added to the draft LAP:

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



The CE is happy to recommend the inclusion of the suggested objectives.

#### CE Recommendation

##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

Add the following text and objectives to Section B.7:

The 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.*



## Item 11 Environment, Heritage & Amenity

### Built Heritage

The Office welcomes the inclusion of the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in section B.6 of the draft Local Area Plan and Objectives BLESS32 and BLESS33 which offer protection to the architectural heritage of Blessington and resistance against any proposed demolition of protected buildings along Main Street / N81, Market Square and Kilbride Road.

With this in mind and having regard to the plans for regeneration of the town centre Opportunity Sites at section B.1 of the draft Local Area Plan, the Office would welcome the inclusion of a reference to the ACA and appropriate mapping in the Opportunity Sites section of the draft Local Area Plan.

### Observation 3 – Architectural Heritage

Having regard to:

- RPO 9.27 of the RSES; and
  - CPO 8.10 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028,
- the Planning Authority is advised to overlay the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area with the Opportunity Sites maps contained within the Town Centre section B.1 of Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

### Chief Executive Response

The ACA boundary can be overlaid with the various drawings associated with opportunity sites; the draft plan does not provide a single drawing / map of all OP sites and this will be rectified.

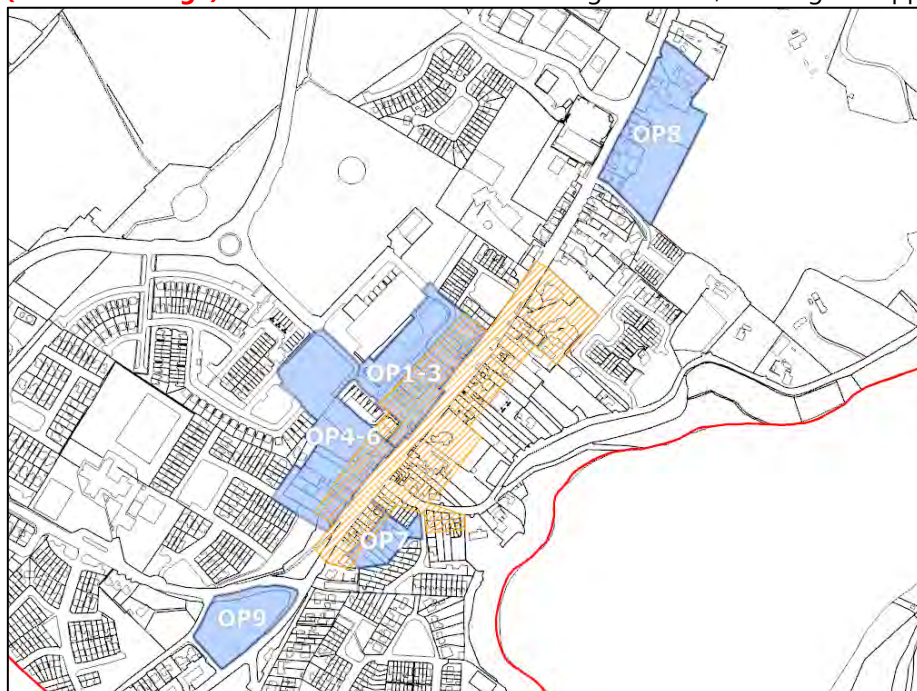
### CE Recommendation

Amend plan as follows

#### Part B.1 Town Centre Regeneration

Add new drawing under heading 'Opportunity Sites' showing all OP sites + TC zone boundary + ACA boundary

**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)**





### **Item 12 Implementation and Monitoring**

Section 6.5 of the Local Area Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013) states that planning authorities are encouraged to periodically review the success or otherwise of the implementation of the policies and objectives of a local area plan by effective monitoring systems such as reviewing the progress in securing the objectives of the County Development Plan in accordance with section 15 of the Act.

In this respect, the Office considers that a more systematic approach to monitoring would better assist the Planning Authority in implementing the key objectives / actions of the draft Local Area Plan, by identifying lead responsibility, suitable indicators for measuring policy objectives and a timeline for implementation of actions / projects. For example, tackling dereliction and vacancy rates, as detailed above.

Guidance on monitoring and implementation is provided in chapter 10 of the Development Plans Guidelines. Further, the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Urban Local Area Plan 2024-2030 and the Newcastle West Local Area Plan 2023-2029 both provide examples of good practice in this area.

#### **Observation 4 – Monitoring and Implementation**

**Having regard to section 15(1) and 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Planning Authority is requested to include a section on what the implementation and monitoring strategy will be and to provide a detailed systematic approach to monitoring the implementation of key objectives and / or actions of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.**

#### **Chief Executive Response**

The Wicklow Forward Planning Department has recently established a development plan monitoring unit and is currently working on building a plan monitoring and development pattern tracking system. It is intended that this system will be functional in 2025, and at that time, all objectives of this LAP will be inputted in order to allow for systematic monitoring to be established.

In the meantime, it is proposed that Appendix 3 be supplemented with additional tables and information on implementation and timeframes with respect to all objectives of the plan and a particular focus on identified development areas (SLOs).

#### **CE Recommendation**

Insert new section into Appendix 6 (as attached)



Item 13 General and Procedural Matters
<p>The Office notes that policy objective BLESS7 sits within Appendix 6 Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation of the draft Local Area Plan. The Planning Authority should consider including policy objective BLESS7 in the main text of the draft Local Area Plan for ease of reference and to ensure equal weight is attributed to all policy objectives.</p> <p>In addition, the Office notes discrepancies between the description of when permission will be considered for the development of New Residential Priority 2 lands at policy objective BLESS7, Zoning Objectives at section B.8 Zoning and Phasing at section B.8 Zoning. The Planning Authority is advised to ensure that all descriptions of when permission will be considered for the development of New Residential Priority 2 lands are consistent with policy objective BLESS7.</p> <p><b>Observation 5 – Policy objective BLESS 7</b>  <b>The Planning Authority is advised to include policy objective BLESS7 within the main text of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 and address discrepancies in the description of when permission will be considered for the development of New Residential Priority 2 lands to ensure consistency with policy objective BLESS 7.</b></p>
Chief Executive Response
<p>Within the LAP, the following objective is set out in Section B.2:</p> <p><b>BLESS7</b>  <i>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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</i></li> <li>- <i>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.</i></li> </ul> <p>This is repeated in Appendix 6.</p> <p>In Section B.8, the same objective has a slightly different wording i.e.  <i>In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned residential 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 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:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>75% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);</i></li> <li>- <i>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.</i></li> </ul> <p>Having considered the matter further, it is recommended that the '75%' provision is appropriate.</p>
CE Recommendation
<p>Amend the LAP as follows:</p> <p><b>Section B.7</b>  <b>Housing Targets &amp; Extant Planning Permissions</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>



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.

#### **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.

#### **Appendix 6**

##### **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.

#### **Item 14 Summary**

The Office requests that your authority addresses the recommendations and observations outlined above. As you are aware, the report of the Chief Executive of your authority prepared for the elected members under section 20 of the Act must summarise these recommendations and the manner in which they will be addressed.

Where your authority decides not to comply with the recommendations of the Office, made to the draft Local Area Plan, please outline the reasons for the decision in the Chief Executive's report.

#### **Chief Executive Response**

Noted



<b>4.1.2 National Transport Authority</b>
<b>Item 1 Overview and Policy Context</b>
<p>From a review of the Draft LAP and LTA, it is considered that the Plan is generally consistent with the Transport Strategy, as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), subject to the observations and recommendations set out in this report. These observations and recommendations are based on the following policy and guidance documentation, as well as the primary provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.</p> <p><u>National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)</u>  This is the strategic framework for future investment decision making in land transport. It guides transport investment in the years ahead to enable the National Planning Framework, support the Climate Action Plan, and promote positive social, environmental and economic outcomes throughout Ireland.  NIFTI sets out the road user modal hierarchy in Ireland as; 1. Active Travel (Walking &amp; Cycling); 2. Public Transport; 3. Private Vehicles.  NIFTI also outlines an intervention hierarchy which is: 1.Maintain; 2.Optimise; 3.Improve; 4.New.</p> <p><u>National Sustainable Mobility Policy</u>  This sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade.</p> <p><u>Climate Action Plan 2024</u>  Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, emissions must reduce by 51% by 2030, setting a path towards a zero net-emissions scenario by 2050. The transport sector is committed to meeting those targets in full. For transport, there are three main actions required that should inform the policies, objectives and measures of the Local Area Plan, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reducing the demand for travel;</li> <li>▪ Increasing use of public transport, walking and cycling and a reduction in trips by car;</li> <li>▪ Conversion of the transport fleet to zero emissions vehicles.</li> </ul> <p><u>National Planning Framework (NPF)</u>  The National Planning Framework sets out the National Policy Objectives (NPO) which align with the National Development Plan (NDP) through delivery of National Strategic Outcomes (NSO).</p> <p><u>Eastern &amp; Midland Regional Assembly – Regional Spatial &amp; Economic Strategy</u>  The RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Eastern &amp; Midlands Region that supports the implementation of the NPF.</p> <p><u>Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022 – 2042</u>  The Transport Strategy sets out a framework for the delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the GDA region as well as key policy objectives that support the integration of land use and transport planning at a local level.  As part of the Transport Strategy, the N81 corridor is designated as a ‘Regional Bus Corridor’, with an objective to provide for enhanced levels of bus priority on this route.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted



## Item 2 Integration of Local Transport Assessment and Local Area Plan

The preparation of a 'Local Transport Assessment' for Blessington, to accompany the LAP, is noted and welcomed given the importance of integrating land use and transport planning, as set out in the Transport Strategy. An integrated approach will ensure that the future transport needs of the Plan area are a central consideration as the Council identify land use objectives and zonings and this can support sustainable travel patterns in the area going forward.

Whilst the provisions of the transport assessment undertaken are generally welcomed, subject to the observations detailed below, it is noted that the LTA has not been undertaken in line with the ABTA guidelines which are used for the preparation of Local Transport Plans. Objective CPO 12.3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan states the following:

*"In collaboration and with the support of the relevant transport agencies, to prepare and / or update existing Area Based Transport Assessments and Local Transport Plans for all towns in Levels 1-4 of the County settlement hierarchy (namely Bray and environs, Wicklow–Rathnew, Arklow, Greystones–Delgany, Blessington, Baltinglass, Enniskerry, Kilcoole, Rathdrum and Newtownmountkennedy and any other settlement where it is deemed necessary by the Planning Authority) and utilise these assessments and plans to inform land use and investment decisions, including the preparation of future Local Area Plans."*

The key outputs of the ABTA process which the NTA recommends are given full expression in a Local Transport Plan are as follows:

- 1) Map of Proposed Permeability and Walking Interventions;
- 2) Cycling Network Map;
- 3) Map of Proposed Cycling Schemes graphically represented by Short-Term, Medium-Term and Long-Term Priority;
- 4) Proposed Public Transport Services Route Map;
- 5) Map of Proposed Public Transport Interventions;
- 6) Road Network Map;
- 7) Traffic Circulation Map; and
- 8) Map of Proposed Roads and Traffic Management Interventions, including Car Parking.

In order to ensure that sustainable transport is central to statutory land use planning policy in Blessington, the following should be provided for in the LAP:

- A comprehensive stand-alone Transport Chapter;
- A set of transport policies and objectives which explicitly reflect the NSMP, NIFTI, DMURS, CDM, and any relevant regional or metropolitan Transport Strategy; and the accompanying Local Transport Plan; and
- All 8 Key Outputs of the Local Transport Plan outlined above as fully and explicitly expressed in text and figures.

Further detail on these aspects is provided later in this report.

### NTA Recommendation

- **To ensure the future transport needs of Blessington are identified based on a robust and comprehensive assessment, it is recommended that the current transport assessment prepared for the town is further developed in consultation with the NTA to form a Local Transport Plan (LTP), closely aligned with the updated ABTA guidance; and**
- **In the event that the LTA is not further developed in line with the above as part of the finalisation of the LAP, the preparation of an LTP should be included as a specific objective of the LAP in line with Objective CPO 12.3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan.**

### Chief Executive Response

No ABTA or Local Transport Plan has been prepared as part of this LAP. This is regrettable but technical resources have not been available for this, and it was decided that the lack of such a study should not hold up progress on preparing new LAP. Instead, available internal resources were deployed to carry out a Local Transportation Assessment that did accompany the draft LAP. The CE is satisfied that this assessment did allow for transportation considerations to be fully integrated into the plan development process.



At this stage of plan making, where a period of only 6 weeks is provided for the CE to prepare a report and make recommendations to the members for amendments if necessary, inadequate time would be available to allow for development and production of a Local Transport Plan, of the form and detail as envisaged by the NTA / TII guidance. As suggested in the submission, a LTP can be prepared after the adoption of the LAP and the CE is agreeable to a new objective to this effect.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

##### **Amend the plane as follows:**

Include new objective in Section B.7

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



### Item 3 Active Travel Proposals

The assessment undertaken of existing active travel infrastructure in the settlement is noted and the recommendations to improve existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure, are welcomed.

It is submitted, however, that active travel measures should be more explicitly identified, with a focus on establishing coherent and integrated walking and cycling networks for the whole settlement, including locations where permeability schemes are required to reduce walking distances to key services such as schools. These networks should be detailed in the LAP and LTA as part of legible maps.

Further to the above, it is submitted that that information should be provided on the potential phasing of the primary active travel measures, which measures will be prioritised and the rationale for same, given potential funding limitations. This can ensure the most primary transport corridors based on demand, potentially in proximity to schools and other key destinations, are served by improved infrastructure in the short term. It is submitted that with regards to potential active travel and general traffic management measures for Main Street, measures should not be solely reliant on the delivery of the relief road and that appropriate targeted measures are brought forward in the short term to improve the urban environment of Main Street for people walking and cycling.

Specific measures related to reducing speed limits, improving the safety and function of junctions for active travel use and providing more frequent and high-quality pedestrian crossings could be more explicitly portrayed and highlighted. It is also submitted that the hierarchy of road users should be incorporated and should form the basis for the identification of measures generally.

From an assessment of the LTA, it is noted that there is limited information provided on the potential for an increased provision of bicycle parking at key destinations in the town, despite the Town Centre First Plan highlighting the limited provision of bicycle parking in the town at present. Furthermore, there is currently an absence of objectives to provide for bicycle/scooter/car share schemes that can accommodate increased rates of active travel use and reduce the need to own a private vehicle. It is submitted that appropriate objectives should be incorporated into the LTA and LAP to support the provision of such schemes going forward.

#### NTA Recommendation

- (i) **Reference to the hierarchy of transport users, as set out in the National Sustainable Mobility Policy should be made in the LAP and LTA;**
- (ii) **Active travel measures should be more explicitly identified in both the LAP and LTA with a focus on identifying overall walking and cycling networks, to be included on appropriate maps in both documents;**
- (iii) **Further objectives could be included and more explicitly identified aimed at improving existing junctions, reducing speed limits and providing more frequent and high-quality pedestrian crossings;**
- (iv) **Objectives should be included to improve the number and quality of bicycle parking locations at key destinations, particularly at Main Street;**
- (v) **Objectives should be included to support the provision of bicycle/scooter/car share schemes at appropriate locations in the town.**

#### Chief Executive Response

- (i) The LTA prepared clearly sets out that the National Sustainable Mobility Policy was one of a suite of higher order strategies, policies and guidelines that were considered in the preparation of the LTA and LAP. In light of same, and other guidance, the LTA clearly states that the key aims of the LTA are to:
  - Ensure that transport and settlement patterns mutually support each other.
  - To assist plan makers to deliver land use policies and objectives to produce a settlement of such form and layout that facilitates and encourages sustainable forms of movement and transport, prioritising active travel modes of walking and cycling and use of public transport.
  - Minimise the need for travel and reduce the length of journeys by maximising the proximity of people, business and the services they require;
  - Promote greater investment in, and usage of, public transport modes, such as rail and bus networks, with the



support of complementary land use policies;

- Protect the capacity, efficiency and safety of national roads and associated junctions;
- Ensure that zoning strategies are consistent with value for money considerations applying to the provision of public infrastructure, including roads and public transport.

In addition, the draft LAP (Chapter 9) states: *'The Transport Assessment has been carried out as part of this plan. The key aims of this assessment is to identify ways to facilitate a modal shift away from private vehicles, to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport, and to provide a sustainable and safe transport environment'.*

It is therefore considered that the LTA and LAP are very clear as to the hierarchy of transport users, and no change is required.

- (ii) It is considered that the transport objectives map adequately show all active travel measures – both those already in train and desired future projects, where known. At this stage of plan making, given the time limits involved, it would not be possible to carry out fresh survey, evaluation and determination of significant or nascent additional transportation measures that might be necessary in the settlement. The CE is committed to such assessment being undertaken as part of the development of a LTP for the plan area. With respect to significant development areas (SLO areas) these will be added to the 2 transport objectives maps to show connectivity.
- (iii) Until further detail study is undertaken of existing junctions, opportunities for reducing speed limits and options for additional pedestrian crossings it would not be possible to include these in the LTA or LAP. The CE is committed to such assessment being undertaken as part of the development of a LTP for the plan area.
- (iv)+(v) The CE is committed to addressing bicycle parking and bicycle/scooter/car share schemes as part of the development of a LTP for the plan area.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

##### **Amend Transport Objectives Maps as follows:**

- Add additional information on active travel projects
- Add SLO areas
- Add OP sites



#### Item 4 Public Transport Measures

It is considered that objectives seeking the further enhancement of public transport infrastructure and services should be referenced in both the LAP and LTA/LTP. This should include referencing support for the continued enhancement of bus services under the Connecting Ireland and Bus Connects programmes and the improvement of bus stop environments. Furthermore, it is requested that the routing of bus services is a central consideration in any active travel projects, to ensure service routings are protected and enhanced where possible.

#### NTA Recommendation

- **Include appropriate objectives to support the continued enhancement of bus services under the Connecting Ireland and Bus Connects programmes;**
- **Include general objectives to support the continued improvement and addition of bus stop infrastructure in the settlement.**

#### Chief Executive Response

Support for bus service and infrastructure enhancement is already provided by County Policy Objective 12.26 which will apply directly in the plan area. However, as this is identified as a key local issue it is recommended that this county objective, adapted to local circumstances, be included in the LAP.

#### Chief Executive Recommendation

**Replace Objectives BLESS 49 with the following revised wording:**

- BLESS-49*** *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.*



<b>Item 5 Car Parking</b>
With regards to the provision of car parking generally in the settlement, it is considered that the LTA/LTP and LAP could be strengthened in terms of objectives to reduce parking over-time in central areas and generally manage it to ensure sustainable forms of transport are encouraged and facilitated. To facilitate a reduction and consolidation of parking over time, it is recommended that a car parking management strategy is undertaken to accompany the LTA/LTP, in line with the recommendations of the Town Centre First Plan. This could assist with objectives to improve active travel facilities and the general urban environment in the town centre through the reallocation of road space.
<b>NTA Recommendation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Prepare a car parking management strategy for the settlement to consider a reduction in on-street parking and a consolidation of parking at appropriate sites on the periphery of core town-centre areas.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
The CE is agreeable to preparing car parking strategy for the settlement as part of a future LTP.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 6 Modal Share Ambitions</b>
It is noted that the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR) typically favour the inclusion of modal share targets as part of a LAP. It is submitted that this should be considered and that generally there should be stronger objectives to reduce private car use in the settlement in favour of active travel and public transport trips. This is in the context of the existing dominance of the car for trip making in the settlement and in the context of wider national objectives to reduce car use, including the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2024. The Climate Action Plan seeks to reduce daily car journeys by 25% by 2030 and increase the number of active travel journeys in the same time frame by 50%.
<b>NTA Recommendation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Consider the inclusion of modal share ambitions for the Plan area in the LTA and LAP/LTP.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
While the suggestion of the NTA is noted, no advice is given as to how these targets may be calculated and it is not considered rational or reasonable to come up with arbitrary modal share targets as part of this plan making process. This is a matter that can be considered in the future LTP.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



## Item 7 Employment Development

The concurrent preparation of a Local Area Plan and Local Transport Assessment represents an important opportunity to ensure that both existing areas and future development locations in the town are well served by sustainable modes of transport and to generally link land use objectives with transport objectives.

The provisions of the LAP that support a compact and sequential form of development for residential and retail uses are therefore welcomed. Such provisions will assist in promoting a pattern of development that supports trips by sustainable modes of transport. It is, however, submitted that the compact and sequential approach to development should also apply to economic development and this should be noted in the LAP. In particular, it should be highlighted that trip intensive forms of employment uses should not be considered appropriate in peripheral areas not served by sustainable transport.

### NTA Recommendation

- **Ensure that appropriate objectives are in place in the LAP to promote a sequential and compact form for employment-based development, with a focus on locating trip intensive development at locations well served by sustainable modes of transport.**

### Chief Executive Response

It is considered that the draft LAP promotes a sequential and compact form for employment development e.g. (specific sections highlighted)

#### **Town Centre & Retail Objectives**

- *To support the continued enhancement of Blessington Town Centre as the heart of the settlement, where people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities can avail of services and interact within their communities;*
- *Ensure that the town centre is an attractive places to live in, to work in and to visit, easy to get to, easy to walk and cycle within and is a competitive place to conduct business;*
- *Create a compact town by reusing existing buildings and maximising the potential of infill and brownfield sites; use all mechanisms and processes available to drive forward the redevelopment and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and derelict sites;*
- *Use public realm improvements to stimulate investment and economic confidence; encourage public art in publicly accessible spaces such as town streets and squares and along existing or future parks and amenity routes;*
- *Promote healthy placemaking and prioritise walking and cycling; improve linkages between core town centre and existing community infrastructure and lands earmarked for future housing development;*
- *Embracing the historic character and heritage attributes of the town centre and strengthen the strong sense of place;*
- *The redevelopment of lands within the town core area, particularly those sites with frontage onto the main streets and squares of Blessington, shall provide for street fronting buildings of a high quality design or for a high quality urban space, including hard and soft landscaping, and appropriate street fixtures and furniture, in order to enhance and create a more attractive streetscape;*
- *To allow a relaxation in certain development standards in the town centre zone in the interest of achieving the best development possible, both visually and functionally while maintaining the highest quality of design in all new developments;*
- *Facilitating a diverse mix of uses, and particularly encourage residential usage at appropriate town centre densities, and the concept of 'living over the shop';*
- *Facilitate an expansion of retail floorspace to reduce leakage of expenditure from both the town itself and the wider County. Guide and promote the expansion of retail floorspace first and foremost within the core retail area and thereafter in accordance with the sequential approach to retail development;*
- *Provide for an expansion in the variety of retail and retail service facilities so that the town includes a range of retail outlets that provide for the day to day needs of the local population and the needs of other businesses and tourists, in accordance with the provisions of the "Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG 2012), and any subsequent Ministerial Guidelines or directives and the Wicklow County Retail Strategy.*

#### **Economic Development & Employment Objectives**

- *Increase the quality and range of employment opportunities by facilitating developments that involve foreign and local investment in a variety of forms, including 'people' and 'product' intensive industries. The Council will particularly support the development of 'people' intensive employment generating developments at locations served*



by sustainable and active modes of transport, those that provide for the local convenience and social service needs of the area and those that provide for the needs of tourists and visitors. The Council will support the development of 'product' intensive industries at appropriate locations, and will particularly support developments based on the use of a local rural resource.

- To facilitate and support the highest degree possible, all forms of employment creation on appropriately zoned land and to promote the intensification of activities on existing employment sites and to take advantage of the existing economic assets of the town in order to stimulate further employment within the area.
- Promote in the first instance the growth of economic activity and employment in the town centre and built up parts of the town; and where a demand for 'greenfield' employment development is identified, to ensure zoned, serviced land is available in appropriate locations in accordance with the zoning principles of the County Development Plan.
- To encourage the redevelopment of town centre and brownfield sites for enterprise and employment creation throughout the settlement 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.
- To encourage and facilitate the development of small to medium scale indigenous industries and services at appropriate locations within Blessington. The Council acknowledges that the development of small scale projects with long term employment potential are important in sustaining both urban and rural settlements in County Wicklow and as such, the Council will adopt a proactive and flexible approach in dealing with applications on a case-by-case basis.
- Support a shift towards low carbon and climate change resilient economic and enterprise activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy.
- To promote high quality housing, community facilities and a built and natural environment that is attractive to indigenous and foreign industry and employees.
- To promote tourist developments at suitable locations that are of an appropriate scale and design, particularly developments that are associated with the tourism products or themes associated with the town and its hinterland and maximise the town's location as a destination and gateway between the tourism assets.
- To facilitate home-working, the development of co-working hubs and innovative forms of working, which reduce the need to travel.

### **Integration of Land-Use and Transportation**

While the overarching rationale for the production of a development plan is to guide land-use, the integration of good land use planning with transportation is a key that can unlock significant improvements in the quality of life, in ways that are tangible to many in the settlement, who have long identified car dependency and commuting as being a major drawback to living in the area. Reducing the need to travel long distances by private car, and increasing the use of sustainable and healthy alternatives, can bring multiple benefits to both our environment and communities. Specifically, while the current built-up area of Blessington is generally within walking distance of public transport, future development patterns should not reverse this situation. In that regard, the crafting of land use zoning within this plan has had regard to the walking distance to public transport and a variety of other facilities.

The draft LAP also includes objective BLESS11 and BLESS14

*'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 facilitate and support the incremental reconfiguration of Blessington Business Park/Oak Drive toward a secondary 'people'-based employment area with a high 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'.*

### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



### 4.1.3 Transport Infrastructure Ireland

#### Item 1 Preamble

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) welcomes notice of the preparation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Blessington by Wicklow County Council and notes that the draft LAP which is the subject of concurrent proposed Variation no. 3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

TII is responsible for the maintenance and operation of safe and efficient national road and light rail networks. Future Luas, Metro and BRT alignments are a matter for the NTA. In addition, TII also has a remit designated by the Department of Transport, which includes greenways and the development of a plan for an inter-urban cycle network which is delivered by the National Cycle Network Plan (NCN) published in January 2024.

*Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan 2021 - 2030*, sets out the key sectoral priority of maintaining Ireland's existing national road network to a robust and safe standard for users. Government also includes the objective to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, in National Strategic Outcome (NSO) no. 2 of the *National Planning Framework*. This requirement is reflected in the existing statutory Section 28 *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012) and recorded at subsection 3.6 *Transport & Accessibility of Chapter 3 Core Strategy of the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028*.

The maintenance and protection of the strategic function of the national road network, that includes junctions, is also amongst the guiding principles of the transport strategy of the *Eastern & Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES) at Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.1. RPO 8.2 promotes the management and enhancement of strategic land transport networks, including by travel demand management. In addition, RPO 8.3 requires that future development is to be planned and designed in a manner that inter alia protects and maintains regional accessibility.

The NTA *Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042* at Measure ROAD2 sets out National Roads Requirements explicitly complementary to the Guidelines and includes provision 1: - *"The primary function of national roads is to cater for strategic traffic and this function must be protected"*.

*Chapter 12 Sustainable Transportation of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022 – 2028* includes National Road Objectives set out at County Plan Objectives (CPOs) 12.35 to 12.42 with roadside signage objectives for the N/M11 and N81 at CPO 12.69 and 12.70 respectively. CPO 12.40 expressly recognises the *DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)*.

As part of TII's responsibilities for managing and improving the country's national road and light rail networks, the Authority sets development guidance and standards for traffic and road assessments and construction that may be necessary by reason of proposed development location, scale or typology to be prepared to precede or accompany applications for developments or works. Technical guidance and standards are contained in TII Publications, available at <https://www.tiipublications.ie/>.

By review of the draft LAP maps, TII notes the following interactions between the draft LAP and the N81: -

- The "Settlement Boundary" indicated in the draft LAP maps includes the N81 which is currently subject to 100kmh, 80kmh, 60kmh and 50kmh limits within that LAP settlement boundary.
- Draft LAP Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives indicates two "Specific Local Objective" (SLO) areas adjoining the N81 at its northern end within the LAP area. SLO 3 appears to adjoin the western side of the N81 at the 100kmh speed limit zone and SLO 4 appears to adjoin the eastern side of the N81 at the 80kmh zone.
- Also indicated on draft LAP Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives are "Road Objectives" interacting with the N81 toward the northern and southern end of the draft LAP area.
- Draft LAP Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives and Map No. 5 Transport Strategy indicate *"Preferred Route Alignment N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme"* that bypass Blessington to the north and is indicated to interchange with the existing N81 inside the southern end of the draft LAP boundary and outside of the northern end of the draft LAP boundary.
- Draft LAP Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives, Map No. 5 Transport Strategy, Map No. 6 Active Travel Strategy, and Map No. 7 Greenway Supporting Infrastructure indicates the inclusion of a section of the "Blessington



eGreenway" within the LAP boundary.

- Draft LAP Map No. 7 Greenway Supporting Infrastructure also indicates a "Local Greenway Feeder" annotation along the N81
- Also noted indicated on the western side of the N81 in the vicinity of the transition is a "Potential Supporting Car Park Location". Another "Potential Supporting Car Park Location" is noted located far east of the N81 toward the north-eastern extremity of the draft LAP area.
- The items annotated on draft LAP Map No. 7 are repeated Map No. 6 Active Travel Strategy. TII notes that the "Potential Supporting Car Park Location" in the vicinity of the N81 and Blessington WWTP is annotated with a "Route Greenfield / Brownfield".

The following TII observations seeks to address the safety, capacity, and strategic function of the national road network in accordance with TII's statutory functions and the provisions of official policy outlined in Project Ireland 2040, the Section 28 Guidelines Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), and the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

#### **Chief Executive Response**

Noted



**Item 2 Strategic Transport Context**

The Authority advises that the implementation of all national road schemes is subject to budgetary constraints and is subject to prioritisation and adequacy of the funding resource available to the Authority. In these circumstances and taking account of the Exchequer financial position and levels of funding available to the Authority, the priority or timeframe for national road schemes may be subject to alteration. TII advises that a realignment scheme for the N81 in the vicinity of Blessington is not currently or resourced under the National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 (NDP).

TII observes that the draft LAP at Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives and Map No. 5 Transport Strategy identifies "N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme" and "N81 Preferred Route corridor". The Council is aware of the foregoing status of the "N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme". TII reminds the Council that the implementation of land use and transposition objectives, including Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) and interventions reliant on this national road scheme should have regard that this project is not currently resourced under the NDP and/or Government Exchequer funding.

**Chief Executive Response**

Noted

**Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



### Item 3 Draft LAP, National Roads and Appropriate Transport Assessment

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.6 of the EMRA RSES requires Local Transport Plans (LTPs) to be prepared for selected settlements in the Region by local authorities in conjunction with the NTA. *The GDA Transport Strategy* includes *MEASURE PLAN17 – Local Transport Plans* are to be based on the ABTA methodology as part of the statutory plan-making process. Wicklow County Development Plan *Sustainable Transport Objectives* in Chapter 12 includes *Sustainable Mobility Objectives* including CPO 12.3 to prepare and / or update existing Area Based Transport Assessments (ABTAs) and LTPs for all towns in Levels 1-4 of the County settlement hierarchy which includes Blessington.

The TII submission to the pre-draft stage of the Blessington LAP recommended that land use transportation assessment for any future Local Area Plan should be prepared based on an evidence-based area transport assessment in accordance with the requirements of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* and the *Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy* and should demonstrate compatibility with the strategic function of the national road network. TII further recommended that any land use transportation assessment to support the LAP should be prepared in accordance with the ABTA Guidance and referred the Council to section 1.4 of the TII Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014) that addresses Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) for Forward Planning. In addition, TII directed attention to guidance also available in TII Publications PE-PDV-02046 (Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes), jointly prepared by TII and the NTA.

TII notes the inclusion of Appendix 4 Blessington Local Transport Assessment as part of the draft LAP and highlights the following:

- TII notes and supports that the draft LAP Appendix 4 Transport Assessment is stated at Part 1 to have had regard inter alia to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and ABTA guidance. TII also notes that the draft LAP Appendix 6 Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation includes the statement to “implement measures identified” in the Transport Assessment. However, TII is of the opinion that the draft LAP Transport Assessment does not represent nor meet the requirements of evidence based transport planning as would be expected to accompany an ABTA or an LTP nor the requirements of County Development Plan Sustainable Mobility Objective CPO 12.3 for the preparation of an LTP for Blessington.
- TII advises that having regard to proposed Transport Assessment active travel, public transport and roads “recommendations” and “objectives” that potential interactions with the national road network including its interchanges/junctions and ancillary infrastructure such as structures and drainage will also occur but have not been addressed. This is a concern.
- Having regard to the draft LAP’s extent including the N81 and interactions identified at the outset of this submission, TII recommendations for an ABTA process to inform a draft LAP for Blessington require that that any measures, objectives or recommendations identified that interact with the national road network do so in a manner that: -
  - observes national roads policy set out in Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012); and
  - recognises of the existence of and compliance responsibilities for the design and delivery of projects impacting the national roads network under TII Publications (<https://www.tiipublications.ie/>).
- In the interests of aiding future reviews, TII recommends an editing review of the Transport Assessment for uniformity of contents headings with those utilised in the document and to ensure that numbering of subheadings is in order. For example, the contents list part 3 as Transport Objectives and the body of the document entitles this part Transport Strategy & Objectives, the body of the document appears of have subsection 2.3.2. followed by 2.3.4, section 2.4 is entitled Roads Infrastructure but certain of the subheadings begin with 2.3 rather than 2.4, and there is a repeat of section 2.4 entitled Car Parking.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

**Clarification of the role of the draft LAP Transport Assessment and the requirement under County Development Plan Sustainable Mobility Objective CPO 12.3 for the preparation of an LTP as part of the LAP.**



In this regard, TII recommends a review and revision of the proposed Transportation Objectives BLESS 43 to BLESS 50 to include a dedicated Transportation Objective for the undertaking of an LTP which observes the ABTA methodology and takes account of policy and interactions with national road networks infrastructure.

#### **Chief Executive Response**

No ABTA or Local Transport Plan has been prepared as part of this LAP. This is regrettable but technical resources have not been available for this, and it was decided that the lack of such a study should not hold up progress on preparing new LAP. Instead, available internal resources were deployed to carry out a Local Transportation Assessment that did accompany the draft LAP. The CE is satisfied that this assessment did allow for transportation considerations to be fully integrated into the plan development process.

At this stage of plan making, where a period of only 6 weeks is provided for the CE to prepare a report and make recommendations to the members for amendments if necessary, inadequate time would be available to allow for development and production of a Local Transport Plan, of the form and detail as envisaged by the NTA / TII guidance. An LTP can be prepared after the adoption of the LAP and the CE is agreeable to a new objective to this effect. All of the concerns raised by the TII with respect to interactions with the N81 for example can be addressed in detail in this future LTP.

The LTA prepared can be edited to correct any numbering or heading issues as identified by the TII.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

**Amend the plan as follows:**

**Include new objective in Section B.7**

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

**LTA Appendix**

Review numbering and headings of sections



#### Item 4 Draft LAP Transportation Objectives in Chapter B.7 Infrastructure of the draft LAP

The indicated extent of land use and transportation objectives of the draft LAP that will create interactions with the N81 especially at locations outside urban speed limit zones. TII strongly recommends explicit recognition of official national roads development policy and TII Publications amongst the Transportation Objectives of the LAP to ensure compatibility of future development with the maintenance of the safe and efficient operation of the national road network in accordance with official national roads policy and TII Publications.

In this regard, TII notes that the current Transportation Objectives of the draft LAP BLESS 43 to BLESS 50 include the objectives to “support the implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment” for improvement and safety schemes and greenway that interact with the N81 at BLESS43; regional / distributor roads and road improvements at BLESS44; and active travel routes along the existing road network including the N81 at BLESS45.

TII further notes that other Transportation Objectives include provisions that could interact with the N81 such as the greenway feeder route that is indicated along the N81, BLESS46; additional car parking along the N81 and assumed to include “Potential Supporting Car Park Locations” indicated on Map No. 7 Greenway Supporting Infrastructure as BLESS 48; consideration of bus stops potentially located outside the urban speed limit zone on the N81 associated with welcomed improvements to bus services under BLESS49. The implementation of all and any of these Objectives have the potential to interact directly and indirectly with the national road network and associated assets.

TII recommends that TII Publications (Standards and Technical) that should be recorded to be observed as part of the Transportation Objectives. TII Publications set design guidance for the national road network and associated infrastructure as echoed in section 1.3 Application of this Manual of DMURS and Government’s NGS Circular No. 2 of 2022 re. Application of Guidelines and Standards in relation to works on Public Roads in Ireland.

In this way, 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.

TII also notes the stated intention of the “on-going” implementation of the Transport Assessment as part of a “living programme” at draft LAP Appendix 6 Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation. TII is concerned that transport interventions that may impact the national road network may progress without regard to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) or compliance with the requirements of TII Publications, and therefore may be contrary to the interests of the safe and efficient operation of the national road network.

Having regard to the above and in the interests of coherent implementation of the draft LAP that appears to include future intended reviews and implementation of the recommendations of the Transport Assessment, TII recommends the following critical revision to LAP Transportation Objective BLESS 50:

##### **Recommendation 2:**

**Revision of proposed draft LAP Transportation Objective BLESS 50 to reflect official national roads policy and for the requirements of TII Publications for works potentially impacting the national road network.**

**Revision of Transportation Objective BLESS50 in Chapter B.7 Infrastructure as follows:**

***“To protect the strategic function of the N81 ~~(and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof)~~ as it relates to the plan area in accordance with Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications.”***

#### Chief Executive Response

This draft LAP has been prepared to be consistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, including all strategies, principles, policies and objectives contained therein.

In addition, this LAP sits under the County Development Plan in the hierarchy of local plans, and therefore the



provisions of the County Development Plan apply directly in the LAP area, and as set out in the draft plan, it was not considered necessary to re-state all of the County principles / strategies / policies / objectives in the LAP itself.

In particular, the County Development Plan includes the following objectives with respect to national roads that will apply directly in the plan area:

- CPO 12.37** *To ensure that the N/M11 and N81 route improvement corridors as defined by TII are protected from inappropriate development and ensure that no development is permitted which would interfere with route options identified (as shown on Map 12.01).*
- CPO 12.38** *To co-operate with TII in the upgrade of existing interchanges on the National Routes and where appropriate and necessary, to restrict development immediately adjacent to interchanges to provide for the future enlargement of interchanges.*
- CPO 12.40** *To safeguard the capacity and safety of the National Road network by restricting further access onto National Primary and National Secondary roads in line with the provisions of the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads' Guidelines' (DoECLG 2012). In particular, a new means of access onto a national road shall adhere to the following:*
- Lands adjoining National Roads to which speed limits greater than 60kmh apply: The creation of any additional access point from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60kmh apply shall generally be avoided. This provision applies to all categories of development, including individual houses in rural areas, regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant.*
  - Transitional Zones: These are areas where sections of national roads form the approaches to or exit from urban centres that are subject to a speed limit of 60kmh before a lower 50kmh limit is encountered. Direct access onto such road may be allowed in limited circumstances, in order to facilitate orderly urban development. Any such proposal must, however, be subject to a road safety audit carried out in accordance with the TII's requirements and a proliferation of such entrances, which would lead to a diminution in the role of such zones, shall be avoided.*
  - Lands adjoining National Roads within 50kmh speed limits: Access to national roads will be considered by the Planning Authority in accordance with normal road safety, traffic management and urban design criteria for built up areas.*
- CPO 12.41** *To ensure that all new developments in proximity to National Routes provide suitable protection against traffic noise in compliance with S.I No. 140 of 2006 Environmental Noise Regulations and any subsequent amendments to these regulations.*
- CPO 12.42** *To protect the carrying capacity, operational efficiency and safety of the national road network and associated junctions, significant applications either in the vicinity of or remote from the national road network and associated junctions, that would have an impact on the national route, must critically assess the capacity of the relevant junction. If there is insufficient spare capacity to accommodate the increased traffic movements generated by that development taken in conjunction with other developments with planning permission that have not been fully developed, or if such combined movements impact on road safety, then such applications must include proposals to mitigate these impacts.*

It is therefore considered that the change request is not essential, but the CE has no objection to the suggested alternative wording.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

**Amend plan as follows:**

#### **Section B.7 Infrastructure**

**BLESS - XX** To protect the strategic function of the N81 ~~(and any upgrade/bypassed route thereof) as it relates to~~



~~the plan area~~ in accordance with *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012) and in compliance with TII Publications.

#### **Item 5 Draft LAP Chapter B.8 Zoning, Specific Local Objectives SLO 3 and SLO 4**

TII notes that Chapter B.8 Zoning of the draft LAP at section 11.5 Specific Local Objectives states that Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) are provided "...to guide developers as to the aspirations of the plan regarding 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 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 agreed prior to the submission of the first application within the SLO." A total of 8 no. SLO areas are identified and described in the draft LAP, most accompanied by a "Concept Plan".

At the outset of this submission TII noted that two Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) adjoin the N81 at its northern end within the draft LAP area; SLO3 appears to adjoin the western side of the N81 at the 100kmh speed limit zone, and SLO4 appears to adjoin the eastern side of the N81 at the 80kmh zone.

TII has also observed that each of the proposed SLOs holds, or, is bounded by indicative "Road Objectives" that appear to consist of "R01" an "Arterial Street" west of the N81 in SLO3 and "R04" a "Link Street" to the east of the N81 in SLO4 that are indicated to join the N81 in a revised junction arrangement in the vicinity of the access to Doran's Pit and the junction of the L-8734.

Draft LAP SLO3 and SLO4 lands relative the N81 national strategic asset are at locations where the 80kmh and 100kmh limits apply. TII would highlight that these proposed SLOs have potential for impacts and interactions on the national road network.

TII reminds the Council of the requirements of Section 2.5 of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012) which requires careful forward planning consideration of the speed limit and capacity of the national road network.

In addition, having regard to the indicated roundabout connection of the proposed local roads to the N81 which will create a new national road junction, regard should be had to Section 2.7 of the Guidelines which indicates that planning authorities exercise particular care in their assessment and management of development proposals in the Development Plan relating to the zoning of locations at or close to junctions on the national road network where such development could generate significant additional traffic, thereby potentially compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national road/associated junctions and possibly leading to the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users.

TII advises that the Guidance indicates that planning authorities must make sure that such development which is consistent with planning policies can be catered for by the design assumptions underpinning existing or planned junctions and interchanges, thereby avoiding potentially compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national road/associated junctions and possibly leading to the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users.

TII would have expected that these requirements associated with the DoECLG *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012) would be addressed as part of the Transport Assessment associated with the draft LAP. This apparent omission of addressing national planning policy in an evidenced manner for these significant development areas is a serious concern to the Authority.

Related to the above matters, future potential development physical interactions with national roads infrastructure will need to demonstrate compliance with TII Publications.

In summary, TII are of the opinion that there is a serious deficiency in the draft Local Area Plan and these SLO's with respect to already indicated deficiencies in transport assessment, consideration of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012) and in turn addressing the protection of national roads physical assets in compliance with TII Publications. TII are therefore of opinion that taking account of the contents of



location and proposed development profile of SLO(s) 3 and 4 that these objectives and the SLO4 concept plan are premature and require revision prior to adoption of the draft Local Area Plan.

### **Recommendation 3:**

**Review and Revision of Specific Local Objectives SLO3 and SLO4 to reflect official national roads policy and for the requirements of TII Publications.**

**Review and revision of SLO's 3 and 4 to take account of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG, 2012) and the maintenance of the safe and efficient operation of national road network assets in accordance with TII Publications.**

### **Chief Executive Response**

It is intended that on the completion of the BIRR, that the speed limit from the new roundabout at the northern end of the BIRR on the N81 and the existing southern roundabout at Blessington Industrial Estate, will be reduced as traffic not bound for Blessington is diverted onto the BIRR. This will allow for significant town centre / public realm / public transport improvements to be carried out in Blessington.

With respect to SLO3, these lands which are currently in quarry use, already access directly onto the N81. It is the objective of this plan that these lands, following rehabilitation, may be suitable for additional forms of development including general employment / enterprise and a public amenity park. It is intended that general vehicular traffic associated with such uses would access the public road network via the BIRR but that HGVs should continue to access the road network onto the N81, as they do currently.

As indicated in the draft Plan, it is intended that SLO4 will be serviced by a new link road from the new N81 roundabout (to be developed as part of the BIRR) to the Kilbride Road. Only cyclist / pedestrian traffic is indicated as desired from SLO3 onto the current N81.

Any concerns that arise with respect to interactions of these SLOs with the N81 can be addressed in appropriate detail in the future LTP and indeed in any future planning applications that may be made for these lands. It is recommended that additional text may be added to the plan for SLOs to address the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

**Amend plan as follows:**

#### **Section B.8 Zoning**

##### ***Specific Local Objectives (SLO)***

*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>Item 6 Conclusion</b>
<p>TII has identified potential significant interaction of the draft LAP with the national road network with the N81, a vital inter-regional route part of o the national road network and upon which Blessington relies.</p> <p>The recognition of the foregoing provisions of official policy and national objectives in relation to spatial planning and national roads by specific written reference to the DoECLG <i>Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2012) and TII Publications in the draft LAP is critical also having regard to Appendix 4 Blessington Local Transport Assessment of the draft LAP that includes recommendations likely to directly or indirectly impact the N81.</p> <p>The 3 no. recommendations in this submission accord with existing national, regional and local development policy and objectives related to national road networks and seek to advance certain relevant draft Transportation and Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) in a manner that will foster future development compatibility with the maintenance of the safe and efficient operation of the national road network.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted



#### **4.1.4 Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage**

##### **Archaeology**

1. All objectives and development control measures relating to the archaeological heritage included in the current Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (including Chapter 8, CPO 8.1 – CPO 8.9) shall be reflected in the Blessington Local Area Plan to ensure sustainable development and the continued protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage.
2. All references in the Blessington Local Area Plan to the relevant Government Department responsible for the protection of the archaeological heritage in the Local Area Plan jurisdiction should read “Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage” as the National Monuments Service is currently part of that particular Government Department. The formulation and implementation of policy relating to the protection of Ireland's archaeological heritage is the responsibility of the Department.
3. It is noted that reference is made to the archaeological heritage in Section B.6 of the Draft plan, entitled ‘Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.’ While it is acknowledged in the draft plan that there are a number of archaeological sites within the plan area that are listed on either the Record of Monuments and Places or the Sites and Monuments Register, it would be useful to include a list and/or details of the known and protected archaeological sites identified within the jurisdiction area to ensure awareness of the presence of these sites within development zoned lands and to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage within the LAP area.

The Department recommends that the content of the Record of Monuments & Places for the planning area covered by the Blessington LAP be included, perhaps as an appendix to the plan - including the link to the legal RMP documents at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie). It should also be made clear that additional archaeological sites and monuments have been identified by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, the Department, in the Historic Environment Viewer (HEV), which is also available at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie). Similar provision within the Blessington Local Area Plan is recommended in relation to the potential underwater archaeological heritage in the area and reference is made to the many archaeological sites that were flooded during the creation of the Poulaphouca Reservoir. It is important to note that these archaeological sites may survive underwater and provision for protection within the plan should also be considered.

4. Land Use Zoning & Development Control: It is considered best practice by the Department for archaeological assessment, where applicable, to be completed at the earliest possible stage in the planning process. Adhering to this approach will ensure that an appropriate archaeological strategy can be formulated in advance of a planning decision, so resulting in an informed planning decision and the attachment to any grant of permission of archaeological conditions which secure both sustainable development and the protection of the archaeological heritage.
5. Archaeological assessment will be considered necessary where proposed development is located within the ‘Zone of Notification’ associated with archaeological sites listed on the Record of Monuments & Places and it would be useful in this regard to include mapping in the Blessington LAP which shows the location of the known archaeological sites relative to the Land Use Zoning objectives and associated mapping included in the draft plan (i.e. Specific Local Objective lands). For example, it would be informative to include location details for identified archaeological site WI005-131 ring-ditch on the ‘Specific Local Objective 2 – Blessington Demesne (West)’ mapping (Figure B.8.2) and WI005-023 enclosure on Specific Local Objective 3 (Figure B.8.3).
6. Community Archaeology: It would be useful and informative to include reference in the Blessington Local Area Plan to the potential for obtaining funding for community-based archaeological projects from the recently established ‘Community Monuments Fund’ which is currently administered by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. See link for further details:  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bd7d6-community-monuments-fund-2023-call-for-projects/>

##### **Chief Executive Response**

1. This draft LAP has been prepared to be consistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, including all strategies, principles, policies and objectives contained therein. In addition, this LAP sits under the County Development Plan in the hierarchy of local plans, and therefore the provisions of the County Development Plan



apply directly in the LAP area, and as set out in the draft plan, it was not considered necessary to re-state all of the County principles / strategies / policies / objectives in the LAP itself and therefore no change is recommended. In particular, the County Development Plan includes the following objectives with respect to archaeology that will apply directly in the plan area:

- CPO 8.1** *To secure the preservation of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally. In the development management process, there will be a presumption of favour of preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record. In securing such preservation, the Planning Authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*
- CPO 8.2** *No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) or any other site of archaeological interest will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.*
- CPO 8.3** *Any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance as identified in Schedules 08.01 & 08.02 and Maps 8.01 & 8.02 of this plan) shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.*
- CPO 8.4** *To require archaeological assessment for all developments with the potential to impact on the archaeological heritage of riverine, intertidal or sub tidal environments.*
- CPO 8.5** *To facilitate new or improved public access to and erection of appropriate interpretive signage at National Monuments, archaeological sites, castles, sites of historic interest and archaeological landscapes in State or private ownership, as identified in Schedule 08.02 and Map 8.02 of this plan, in co-operation with landowners.*
- CPO 8.6** *To protect the integrity of Baltinglass Hills archaeological landscape including identified monuments and their wider setting by resisting development that may adversely impact upon the significance and understanding of this important landscape.*
- CPO 8.7** *To support the inscription of Glendalough to Ireland's tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site list and promote a conservation led approach to facilitating visitor access and enjoyment of this internationally significant landscape.*
- CPO 8.8** *To protect and promote the characteristics of historic towns in County Wicklow identified as zones of archaeological potential in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), ensuring that cognisance is given in relevant development proposals to retaining existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.*
- CPO 8.9** *To protect and promote the conservation of historic burial grounds (those that are generally no longer in use but which may contain sites and features on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and/or RPS) and support greater public access to these where possible.*

2. It should be noted that there are no references in LAP to the National Monuments Service or the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage so this issue does not arise and therefore no change is recommended.

3+5 All National Monuments and Areas of Archeological Potential, in accordance with data provided by the Department as the time of production of the draft plan, are shown on Map 2A of the draft plan. A link can be



provided in the legend on this map to the Department data sources. In addition, the SLO maps can be enhanced to identify any National Monuments.

4. As provided for by CPO 8.1 *'In the development management process, there will be a presumption of favour of preservation in-situ or, as a minimum, preservation by record. In securing such preservation, the Planning Authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage'.*

With respect to the stage in the planning application process that archeological assessments are carried out, it would not be within the remit of the Planning Authority to require such assessments be submitted with any application; it can only advise that such assessment may be necessary should pre-planning advice be sought. Where it becomes evidence upon receipt of any application that archeological impact assessment is required, legislation provides scope for a Planning Authority to seek such additional information. This is not a matter for planning policy or for this LAP and therefore no change is recommended.

6. This is not a matter for planning policy or for this LAP and therefore no change is recommended.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

**Amend plan as follows:**

##### **Section B.8 Zoning**

##### ***Specific Local Objectives (SLO)***

*Add National Monuments points onto SLO maps.*

**Map 2A:** Include link to Department archaeology data sources [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)



#### 4.1.5 Department of Transport

There are a number of key policies and requirements relevant to accessible, integrated and sustainable public transport which the Department of Transport (DoT) considers should be reflected in the proposals. The Department notes and welcomes reference to some of these policies in the appended Local Transport Assessment.

##### **Accessible public transport for All, and especially for Disabled People, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Reduced Mobility and Older People**

- the “whole of Government” National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022 included specific actions assigned to local authorities. For example, action 108 related to the ‘dishing’ of footpaths and action 109 related to accessible infrastructure, including bus stops. Lack of dishing is often cited as a major concern for wheelchair users. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth are currently finalising the new National Disability Strategy.
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) puts obligations on State Parties to ensure access for persons with disabilities to, for example, the physical environment and transportation in both urban and rural areas.
- making transport fully accessible for all requires a ‘whole journey approach’. This refers to all elements that constitute a journey from the starting point to destination. Local Authorities are a key stakeholder by ensuring a universal design approach to the built environment’. This including footpaths, tactile paving, cycle paths, roads, pedestrian crossing points, town greenways and bus stops/shelters.
- the Sustainable Mobility Policy contains a number of specific actions and commitments underpinning this approach. It sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.
- the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) Interim Advice Note – Covid-19 Pandemic Response includes guidance that designers should ensure that measures align with the principles of universal design, consider Government policy on accessibility for people with disabilities and consult people with disabilities to further appraise measures.
- the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan (2022-2025) is a major national public transport initiative with the aim of increasing public transport connectivity, particularly for people living outside the major cities and towns.

The Department of Transport can assist with appropriate text in the development plan regarding integrated, accessible public transport if desirable.

#### Chief Executive Response

The CE agrees fully with all of the points raised with respect to improving accessibility and mobility for all in society.

The majority of the above suggestions relate to road design or public transport infrastructure / systems issues, such as the design guidance set out in the DMURS. It is not considered necessary to include objectives relating to same in the LAP as all of the requirements of these national guidance documents already apply in the plan area, via the application of the provisions and design standards of the Wicklow County Development Plan.

#### Chief Executive Recommendation

No change



4.1.6 Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
Item 1 Preamble
<p>The Government is committed to achieving climate neutrality no later than 2050 with a 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. These legally binding objectives are set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the Climate Act).</p> <p>The Climate Act supports Ireland’s transition to net-zero and the achievement of a climate neutral economy no later than 2050. It also establishes a legally binding framework with clear targets and commitments, to ensure the necessary structures and processes are in place to deliver national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term. Against this background, strategies must be devised to reduce and manage climate change risks through a combination of mitigation and adaptation responses, both in the medium and longer term.</p> <p>The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications’ vision of a climate neutral, sustainable, and digitally connected Ireland will be achieved by collaboratively delivering policies and programmes to empower people, communities, and businesses to continue the transition to a better quality of life for current and future generations. This vision also aligns with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs, which provide a plan of action for people, prosperity and planet, with the commitment to leave no-one behind.</p> <p>The step change in our ambition from a low carbon to climate neutral Ireland requires strong leadership across Government and the wider public sector. This Department will drive the climate agenda by engaging with local authorities to build resilience in citizens, communities, and business to overcome climate adaptation challenges, maximising climate mitigation and adaptation opportunities and facilitating the transition to a truly Circular Economy.</p> <p>This will also help to deliver on the Government’s ‘whole-of-society’ approach for the successful implementation of the SDGs, driving in particular the achievement of Goal 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy, Goal 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, and Goal 13 on Climate Action. Achieving the SDGs overall will require fundamental changes in many parts of Irish life, but it is also an opportunity to create a cleaner, greener, fairer economy and society.</p> <p>The Department asks that you take the material outlined in the following sections into consideration when finalising the Draft Blessington LAP, which align with our Statement of Strategy for the period 2024-2025, Le Chéile 25, which itself sets out our vision, mission, and six strategic goals in key policy areas.</p> <p>The Department also asks that you take into consideration the framework of Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their respective targets, in the overall drafting of the Plan, and in relation to the specific areas outlined below.</p>
Chief Executive Response
Noted



**Item 2 Wicklow County Development Plan (WCDP) 2022-2028**

The Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) require the LAP to be consistent with the objectives of the Development Plan and its Core Strategy. In this regard, DECC note the positive objectives of the WCDP 2022-2028, which places climate action as a strategic principle of the plan. Objectives at County level for climate action, renewable energy infrastructure, communications infrastructure inter alia should be reflected by objectives and actions of the LAP, as relevant for the plan area, to support implementation of national, regional and county level policy on these themes. The following recommendations, which are reflected in the Department's previous submission for the Pre-Draft public consultation for the Blessington LAP, are an opportunity to further strengthen objectives of the LAP.

**Chief Executive Response**

As set out in the introduction to the draft LAP: *'The majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan, other than the summary provided in Section A.2, unless it is considered necessary to emphasise assets or restate objectives that have particular relevance and importance to the area. While this will facilitate the streamlining of this plan to just those issues that are relevant to this area, and an overall reduction in the content of the plan, this should not be seen a diminution of the level of importance or indeed protection afforded to this area.*

*In particular, development standards, retail strategies, housing strategies etc that are included in the County Development Plan shall not be repeated, and shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Local Area Plan. Any specific policies / objectives or development standards required for this area will be stated as precisely that, and in all cases will be consistent with the County Development Plan. Thus development standards will therefore be the same across the entire County, and any differences for specific settlements would be clear and transparent, to both those adopting the plans, and the general public alike.*

*It is also important to note that the land-use objectives of this plan aim to support other plans and strategies prepared by Wicklow County Council, including the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan, Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, Wicklow Heritage Plan etc., all which have a wider remit than this LAP. However, this Local Area Plan shall only include objectives that are area specific and achievable, and avoid those that are aspirational or are best dealt with in the annual budget, road works programme, etc. The role of land use plan is to put in place a framework within which development can occur, but does not decide what works actually get done by either private individuals or public bodies. The delivery of objectives will be determined by the initiation of private development or by the allocation of public funding through the annual budgetary process, which is a separate process to any land use plan'.*

Therefore the positive elements of the County Development Plan identified by the Department do not require to be re-iterated in this LAP, as they directly apply already.

**Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



### Item 3 Climate Action

The Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third annual update in the series of Ireland's Climate Action Plans. The CAP24 lays out a roadmap of actions to meet our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. The draft LAP makes no reference to the CAP24. Having regard to same, the Local Authority should ensure that the LAP includes reference to, supports the implementation of and is consistent with the CAP24, in accordance with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015 (as amended).

#### Recommendation 1:

**The Department recommends that an objective and / or policy is included in the LAP to support the implementation of CAP24 (and annual revisions thereof).**

National Adaptation Framework: The Department notes the new National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was approved by Government on the 5th of June 2024.

#### Recommendation 2:

**The Department recommends that an objective and /or policy is included in the LAP to support the implementation of the NAF.**

Local Authority Climate Action Plan: The Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (Wicklow LACAP) was adopted on the 8th January 2024. The Wicklow LACAPs central aims are aligned with the Government's national climate objective.

Under section 10(2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), a CDP must, when being prepared, take into account the LACAP. While this provision is relevant to County Development Plans, the preparation of the draft LAP provides a positive opportunity to support the implementation of the WCDP 2022-2028 objectives for climate action and the Wicklow LACAP. It is important that the Wicklow LACAP and related actions are appropriately reflected in the policies and objectives of the draft LAP, thereby ensuring consistency and alignment between both plans.

#### Recommendation 3:

**The Department recommends that the LAP include objectives and / or policies to ensure the implementation of the Wicklow LACAP and related actions, thereby ensuring consistency and alignment between both Plans.**

### Chief Executive Response

1. The CAP and NAF (as they were constituted at the time) were both considered in detail in the development of the Strategic County Outcomes and County Policy Objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan (Chapter 2 of the County Development Plan refers), which in turn have shaped the draft LAP. With respect to the request that objectives relating to the CAP and NAF be included in this LAP, as national policy and legislation, their provisions apply directly in the plan area and in all local authority decision making, and it is not considered that a local land-use plan is the appropriate or best location for such objectives, which have county wide application; such objectives would be more appropriate for the Wicklow County Development Plan or Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan.
2. The Wicklow County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 was considered in the development of the draft LAP. In particular, the following CAP objectives were integrated into the plan crafting process:
  - *Screen Local Area Plans and future Development Plans for climate resilience ensuring they consider compact development, biodiversity resilience, active travel, sustainable economic development, consider associated climate action co-benefits and environmental protection requirements.*
  - *Deliver the development of a high quality cycling and pedestrian network through Active Travel measures in urban areas and connecting communities. Ensure supported active travel development is carried out in a manner that has due regard to environmental sensitivities such as biodiversity, European sites, water quality and*



hydrology.

- Promote and support participation of schools in Safer Routes to School, ensuring any ancillary development has due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites and local air quality.
- Strengthen towns and villages through enhancement of green infrastructure measures and/or sustainable transport linkages, having due regards for environmental sensitivities such as biodiversity, European sites, water quality and hydrology.
- Complete Local Area Transport Studies for Greystones and Arklow and progress plans for other communities whilst ensuring such plans have due regard to opportunities for promoting climate action co-benefits and planning and environmental protection considerations.
- Facilitate the planning and delivery of the Bus Connects and Bus Service Corridors to facilitate modal transfer to bus services on the N11 including the N11 Bus Corridor and the Park and Ride Infrastructure Strategy for facilities at the following locations: Fassaroe, Ashford / Rathnew, Kilpedder
- Assist the development of shared mobility services by increasing the number of bike facilities, e-bike schemes and shared mobility parking areas.
- Ensure all relevant legislation and regulation on climate change and flood management is integrated into council policies and guidelines, including the promoting of natural flood measures.
- Undertake Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of all Local Area Plans and Development Plans.
- Implement the OPW Flood Risk Management Guidelines and best practices to ensure that all developments consider climate resilience and demonstrate that they integrate Nature-Based SuDS and Nature-Based Solutions to address surface water management. Ensure due regard is given to environmental sensitivities, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology.
- Seek a buffer of generally 25-metre along watercourses as riparian zones for urban areas in line with the Inland Fisheries Ireland publication 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' and the Wicklow County Development Plan.
- Develop and implement an integrated SuDS policy to guide planning, installation, monitoring and maintenance to improve storm-water management. Provide training on SuDS implementation to key staff, having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as biodiversity, European sites and water quality.
- Develop demonstration sites highlighting Nature-Based SuDS providing flood attenuation systems within existing urban areas, having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as biodiversity, European sites and water quality.
- Work with the OPW in order to review and progress more detailed studies on schemes including: Blessington Flood Relief Scheme, Greystones & Environs Flood Relief Scheme, Wicklow & Ashford Flood Relief Scheme, facilitate the hydraulic modelling of the Bray Flood Relief Scheme; facilitate the OPW to conduct a review of the PFRA with regard to flood risk arising from floods on surface water infrastructure such as culverts.
- Having due regard to the need to promote nature-based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems, and environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology, visual amenity and recreation and amenity value.
- Map green infrastructure for the five largest towns to develop an integrated approach, implementing objectives in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans.
- Provide accessible bus stops on new and existing routes.
- Develop a renewables hub at the Wicklow Campus in Clermont to support development of the sector in County Wicklow, while ensuring that the businesses and projects supported accord with relevant planning and environmental protection criteria.
- Promote sustainability in the tourism, food and the hospitality sector.
- Facilitate development of local markets for food producers in the county encouraging sustainable practice in the sector.

Therefore no changes are recommended.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



#### Item 4 Renewable Energy & Electricity Grid

The National Development Plan 2021-2023 (NDP) and the CAP24 commits to increase Ireland's proportion of electricity from renewable sources to 80% by 2030. This measure will be achieved through a combination of onshore and offshore renewable sources supported by various support schemes, including the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), the Small-Scale Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (SRESS) and the Micro-Generation Support Scheme (MSS).

Small-scale and community generation will be supported via the SRESS. SRESS offers a simpler route to market for community and other small-scale renewable projects. Unlike RESS, the SRESS is not auction-based and support for projects will be provided through a guaranteed tariff. The MSS delivers a range of measures to support micro-generation (both for self-consumption and for export).

The Local Authority should note the updates to the national policy context, in particular the CAP24, including Government's renewable electricity generation targets: Solar PV Capacity targets of 8GW by 2030. Onshore wind capacity of 9GW by 2030, in addition to the commitment to supporting at least 500 MW of local community-based renewable energy projects and increased levels of new micro-generation and small-scale generation

The Department notes the positive objectives of the WCDP 2022-2028 concerning the support and promotion of renewable energy, including:

- 'To support and facilitate to the highest degree possible the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy, particularly in the generation of electricity / heating and for use as transport fuel'.
- 'To support and promote the development of 'Sustainable Energy Communities' and in particular to encourage and facilitate developments that are energy neutral / low emission, integrate renewable energy technology or involve local renewable energy production'.
- 'To facilitate and support the development of small-scale electricity generation installations'.
- 'To support the development and expansion of the electricity transmission and distribution grid, including the development of new lines, pylons and substations as required'.

#### Recommendation 4:

**The Department recommends the inclusion of an objective of the Council in the LAP to promote the development of appropriately scaled renewable energy installations (rooftop solar, geothermal energy and other types of installations appropriate to urban environments) and to support the development of additional supporting grid infrastructure. It is crucial that all future development seek to increase their contribution to the national renewable electricity generation target and, where possible, aim for developments that are carbon or energy use neutral.**

#### Recommendation 5:

**The Department recommends that the draft LAP should include reference to:**

- **Shaping Our Electricity Future 1.1, EirGrid's updated roadmap for the development of the transmission grid out to 2030 to deliver on the 80% renewable energy targets.**
- **ESB's Networks Strategy: Networks For Net Zero, which sets out ESB Networks' role in enabling the delivery of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023 and supports the decarbonisation of the electricity system by 2040.**

#### Chief Executive Response

As set out above, in the introduction to the draft LAP, the majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington plan area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan. Therefore it is not considered necessary to re-state the existing policy supports that are already provided for in the County Development Plan for renewables and grid development in this LAP as they directly apply already in the plan area.

#### Chief Executive Recommendation

No change



### Item 5 Built Environment and Heating

The CAP24 includes measures to support the electrification of heating by strengthening our existing Building Regulations and implementing an ambitious National Residential Retrofit Plan. Targets set are 45,000 existing dwellings using heat pumps by 2025, and 400,000 by 2030. The National Residential Retrofit Plan commits the Government to retrofit 120,000 dwellings to B2 or cost optimal by 2025 and 500,000 by 2030.

The Department notes policy of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2022-2032 and the WCDP 2022-2028, which states:

- 'Local authorities shall include policies in statutory land use plans to promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retrofitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock and energy efficiency in traditional buildings.
- All new buildings within the Region will be required to achieve the Nearly Zero- Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)'.
- 'To support and facilitate to the highest degree possible the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy, particularly in the generation of electricity / heating and for use as transport fuel'.
- 'To facilitate retrofitting of existing building with heat saving devices and installations, where permission is required for such works'

#### Recommendation 6:

**The Department recommends that the Local Authority consider including policy to support the ambitions of the National Residential Retrofit Plan, in particular, the development of the electrification of heating, having regard to the CAP24, WCDP, and the RSES.**

#### Compact Growth and District Heating

When preparing the draft LAP, due regard should be given to the ambition of the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the WCDP which requires the achievement of compact growth and explicitly recognises the potential for such compact growth to facilitate the development of low carbon district heating.

Examples include:

- National Planning Framework: 'District heating networks will be developed, where technically feasible and cost effective, to assist in meeting renewable heat targets and reduce Ireland's GHG emissions'.
- Regional Policy Objective 7.38: 'Local authorities shall consider the use of heat mapping to support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted. A feasibility assessment for district heating in local authority areas shall be carried out and statutory planning documents shall identify local waste heat sources'.
- CPO 16.34: 'To support the development of district heating systems, particularly those generating heat from renewable sources.'

#### Recommendation 7:

**The Department recommends that the Local Authority examine the potential of district heating, including district heating derived from waste heat, where available, technically feasible and cost effective and commit to carrying out a feasibility exercise and the use of heat mapping in support of same in the draft policies, having regard to the CAP24, RPO 7.38 of the EMRA RSES, CPO 16.34 of the WCDP, NSO 9 of the NPF and the National Heat Study. As such, policies in support of same are encouraged in the draft LAP**

### Chief Executive Response

1. As set out above, in the introduction to the draft LAP, the majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington plan area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan. Therefore it is not considered necessary to re-state the existing policy supports that are already provided for in the County Development Plan for retrofitting and heating in this LAP as they directly apply already in the plan area.



2. As detailed in the submission, the County Development Plan already supports the development of district heating systems, and therefore such support is not necessary to re-state in this LAP. It is not a matter for a land-use plan to include an objective for a feasibility study; this would be more a matter for the Wicklow CAP and the Council's annual programme and budget.

<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



## Item 6 Circular Economy and Waste

The Department notes the objective of the Local Authority in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, CPO 9.21, which states:

*'To encourage and facilitate the 'circular economy' and the development of 'green' industries, including industries relating to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, material / waste recycling and conservation'.*

New guidance in respect of construction waste management, titled "Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects" published by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2021. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a practical approach to construction and demolition (C&D) waste, which is informed by best practice in the prevention and management of such wastes and resources from design through to construction and deconstruction.

The implementation of this best practice is consistent with the circular economy consistent with Government policy under Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022 – 2023 and The Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027 (EPA).

### **Recommendation 8:**

**The Department recommends that the LAP includes objectives and / or policies to support circular economy principles and includes reference to the EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects (2021).**

In this regard, the Department would advise the Local Authority to consult with their respective Regional Waste Management Planning Office regarding development of the LAP, particularly in relation to any policies which may preclude the continued use of existing waste management infrastructure or development of new waste management infrastructure.

The Department would also ask the Council to have regard to the targets set out in the SDGs, in particular in relation to SDG12 – Responsible Consumption and Production.

## Chief Executive Response

1. As set out above, in the introduction to the draft LAP, the majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington plan area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan. Therefore it is not considered necessary to re-state the existing objectives and standards that are already provided for in the County Development Plan regarding construction management in this LAP as they directly apply already in the plan area. In addition, it is not considered necessary to overload local plans with references to every possible guidelines produced by another state agency when these will be considered as a matter of course and good practice in the operations of the Council.

Attention is drawn to provisions of Chapter 15 and the 'Development & Design Standards' of the Wicklow County Development Plan which state:

**CPO 15.1** *To require all developments likely to give rise to significant quantities of waste, either by virtue of the scale of the development or the nature of the development (e.g. one that involves demolition) to submit a construction management plan, which will outline, amongst other things, the plan to minimise waste generation and the plan to protect the environment with the safe and efficient disposal of waste from the site.*

### **1.4.6 Construction Management**

*All construction sites shall be appropriately managed to ensure that environmental emissions are strictly controlled. Where necessary (such as for larger scale developments or developments in ecologically sensitive areas) this will be enforced by requiring (by planning condition) the agreement and implementation of a 'construction environmental management plan' (CEMP), which should set out, at a minimum, the various best practice construction*



*measures/mechanisms that will be put in place during the construction phase to avoid or mitigate the impacts of: construction traffic, waste, noise, lighting, dust, storm water run-off etc, on adjoining residences and properties, on existing biodiversity, public roads etc.*

*In particular, such plans will set out:*

- Construction programme for the works;*
- Hours of operation;*
- A traffic management plan;*
- Noise and dust mitigation measures;*
- Details of construction lighting;*
- Waste minimisation and management plan, including recycling / re-use of waste where possible (in accordance with circular economy principles);*
- Measures for the protection of natural features, including (but not limited to) mature trees and hedgerows, protected species, ecological corridors and watercourses.*

*A Construction Manager will be required to be appointed to liaise directly with the various sections of the Local Authority and that should include a biodiversity officer, should one be appointed.*

2. With respect to waste management, draft plans are prepared within the local authority as a collaborative exercise across all functions and in this regard, the waste management team were consulted in the preparation of this plan. This exercise determined that no localised waste management issues were arising in the plan area that required more localised planning policy.
3. With respect to SDGs, in particular in relation to 'SDG12 – Responsible Consumption and Production', such a high level strategic goal, which would be applicable across the whole county and across a wide range of sectors, is not considered an appropriate matter for addressing via a local land-use plan.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



Item 7 Telecommunications	
<p>The facilitation and support of the development of telecommunications infrastructure is crucial to the development of the modern economy. In this regard National Strategic Objective 6 of the National Development Plan 2021-2023, states that high-quality, secure, and reliable connectivity to global telecommunications networks is of significant strategic importance to the Irish State. In addition, Harnessing Digital – the Digital Ireland Framework’ (Department of the Taoiseach, 2022) recognises the importance on supporting 5G rollout across all populated areas of Ireland by 2030.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b>  <b>The Department recommends that the draft LAP includes reference to and includes objectives and /or policies to support and facilitate the development telecommunications infrastructure in line with Government policy, including the rollout of 5G.</b></p>	
Chief Executive Response	
<p>As set out above, in the introduction to the draft LAP, the majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington plan area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan. Therefore it is not considered necessary to re-state the existing objectives and standards that are already provided for in the County Development Plan regarding telecommunications this LAP as they directly apply already in the plan area.</p> <p>In this regard, the Wicklow CDP set out the following objectives:</p>	
<b>CPO 16.35</b>	<i>To facilitate and support the roll out of the National Broadband Plan and the development/expansion of communication, information and broadcasting networks, including mobile phone networks, broadband and other digital services, subject to environmental and visual amenity constraints.</i>
<b>CPO 16.36</b>	<i>To support the national objective to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure such as data centres and associated economic activities at appropriate locations.</i>
<b>CPO 16.37</b>	<i>The development of new masts and antennae shall be in accordance with the development standards set out in Appendix 1 of this plan.</i>
<b>CPO 16.38</b>	<i>Facilitate and support the development of public Wi-Fi zones at appropriate public spaces where possible.</i>
<b>CPO 16.39</b>	<i>To support and facilitate to the greatest extent possible the development of new structures and the conversion of existing structures for the development of co-working spaces / hubs providing access to reliable high quality ICT infrastructure within towns and villages, including smaller rural settlements, subject to normal planning criteria.</i>
Chief Executive Recommendation	
No change	



Item 8 Air Quality	
<p>The Department encourages the Local Authority to have regard to the <u>Clean Air Strategy for Ireland</u>, bearing in mind the impacts of measures adopted in the draft CDP on current and future air quality.</p> <p>Air quality data is available from EPA at <u>www.airquality.ie</u>. This gives details of the locations of all monitoring stations currently in operation, along with real-time and historic data from each station</p>	
Chief Executive Response	
<p>As set out above, in the introduction to the draft LAP, the majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington plan area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan. Therefore it is not considered necessary to re-state the existing objectives and standards that are already provided for in the County Development Plan regarding air quality in this LAP as they directly apply already in the plan area.</p> <p>In this regard, the Wicklow CDP set out the following objectives:</p>	
<b>CPO 15.9</b>	<i>To regulate and control activities likely to give rise to emissions to air (other than those activities which are regulated by the EPA).</i>
<b>CPO 15.10</b>	<i>To require proposals for new developments with the potential for the accidental release of chemicals or dust generation, to submit and have approved by the Local Authority construction and/or operation management plans to control such emissions.</i>
<b>CPO 15.11</b>	<i>To require activities likely to give rise to air emissions to implement measures to control such emissions, to undertake air quality monitoring and to provide an annual air quality audit.</i>
Chief Executive Recommendation	
No change	



<b>4.1.7 Department of the Education</b>
<b>Item 1 Population and school place projections</b>
<p>In the context of future population trends and their potential impact on school place requirements, the department notes that this draft LAP refers to the population growth identified for Blessington in the recent draft Wicklow CDP 2022-2028. The department notes that the population scenario envisaged for Co Wicklow overall is the high NPF target of 157,500 people by 2026 and 164,000 by 2031. The plan also states that the NPF identifies Blessington as a "Self-Sustaining Growth Town" with a projected population of 6,145 by 2028. The department made its submissions to the draft CDP regarding Blessington on the basis of the potential population growth within the town and its environs between 2022 and 2031.</p> <p>In terms of future population growth in Blessington, the department notes the reference to the 6,145 population figure for 2028 and the 6,313 population figure for 2031 in Table 2.1 of the draft LAP. The department also notes that Table 2.8 of the Kildare CDP 2023-2029 has a population figure of 251 for Blessington for 2028. The department is equally mindful that the current NPF review has the potential to allocate a further population projected increase that may even go beyond 6,313. Another consideration for the department is the 2031 housing target of 2,433 for Blessington as outlined in Table 2.2 of the draft LAP. Allowing for the Census 2022 average per household figure of 2.84 identified for County Wicklow, the population of Blessington could be closer to 7,000 should that housing target figure be reached.</p> <p>The department notes in the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit that it is stated that the analysis of current and projected education needs is based on the following assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11.5% of the population at any given time is of primary school going age.</li> <li>- 7.5% of the population at any given time is of secondary school going age.</li> </ul> <p>The department currently uses an average of 10.25% to determine primary school place needs and an average of 7.5% to determine post-primary school place needs. It should be noted that these percentage figures are subject to review. In terms of assessing current and future capacity, the Department of Education has to be mindful of potential unforeseen circumstances such as the Ukrainian crisis, which have the ability to put undue pressure on school place provision and could necessitate reassessments of school place provision from time to time. The department will engage with the Councils where the findings of an assessment require a review of existing or future school site provision within a specific location.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



## **Item 2 Sites / Zoning for future schools / school expansion**

1. There are six schools (five primary and one post-primary) located in Blessington town, four of these schools are within the LAP area. The department's preference would be to expand these existing facilities (if possible) should there be a requirement for additional school places resulting from planned population increases. Therefore, the department requests the Planning Authority to examine the potential of protecting a land buffer around each of these schools to enable them to expand further if required.
2. In respect of primary provision, the department welcomes the reference within Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit to zone additional land for education for Gaelscoil na Lochanna in the event the school cannot be delivered on the current permitted site. It is expected that the capacity of this school when completed will be able to cater for future potential needs resulting from the potential future population growth scenarios as identified above. However, the department is also mindful of potential population growth beyond 2031 and will continue to assess its requirements on an ongoing basis.
3. In respect of post primary provision, Blessington Community College's expansion will increase capacity to 1,000 pupils. It is expected that the capacity of this school will be able to cater for future potential needs resulting from the potential future population growth scenarios as identified above. However, the department is also mindful of potential population growth beyond 2031 and will continue to assess its requirements on an ongoing basis.
4. The department also anticipates that additional Special Education Needs provision at both Primary and Post Primary level will be required in the future throughout the country and this may result in schools requiring additional accommodation or space to meet this growing need. The department will consult with the Council if and when additional SEN accommodation or sites for future special schools are required within specific locations. In the context of this LAP, explicit support within the plan for the provision of school accommodation for children and young people with special educational needs would be welcomed.
5. In terms of the identification of future school place requirement that necessitates the need for the reservation and acquisitions of sites for future new schools or the requirement of new sites to facilitate the relocation of existing schools, the department would like to highlight the following points.
  - It is generally considered that schools are enabling infrastructure for housing and as such, schools should be positioned in the heart of new and expanding sustainable communities, allowing for the maximum benefit to the community inside and outside school hours. Further to this, other community facilities and amenities should also be positioned close to school facilities to allow for all community facilities be complimentary to each other for the benefit of the whole community.
  - Sites for future schools or for the redevelopment of existing schools should be identified on appropriate and suitable land for development and zoned accordingly, with specific land use zonings. All enabling infrastructure required to develop and operate school facilities should be provided in advance of the need for such schools. This infrastructure includes road, electricity, water infrastructure, sustainable transport links, active travel networks, road safety measures and safe routes to school facilities. It should be noted that it is not within the remit of the Department of Education to develop or fund this enabling infrastructure.
6. The department notes and welcomes Lands Zoned for Community & Education Use in the Draft LAP that three additional sites have been zoned for Community and Education in the Blessington area.

## **Chief Executive Response**

1. With respect to the four existing schools in the plan area, all efforts have been made to ensure there is adequate land zoned to allow for expansion where feasible:
  - The maximum area available, which is 4ha, is zoned for CE used around Blessington Community College. these lands are already occupied by the school and are in the ownership of KWETB. This is slightly below the Department's desired size of 4.57ha for a 1000 pupil secondary school. However as set out in the submission, the Department expects that the capacity of this school will be able to cater for future potential needs resulting from the potential future population growth scenarios as identified



- An area of 2.2ha is zoned of CE use at and adjoining St. Mary's senior NS. These lands are owned by the Minister for Education & Science. Having regard to Departmental guidelines, this would be an adequate size to accommodate a 32 classroom school.
- Lands measuring 3.6ha are zoned for CE use adjoining Blessington No. 1 School (which separated occupies a site of 1.1ha). These lands are in private ownership and the draft plan has made provision for the reservation of these lands for future education uses. Such lands would be adequate in size for both existing school expansion and new school provisions.
- St. Mary's junior NS is located on a site on 0.68ha in the centre of Blessington, adjacent to the Church of Our Lady. Given its historical development and the pattern of development surrounding, there are no options for the reservation of lands for expansion at this location.

Other than these sites, additional lands are zoned for CE use in the plan area, with one additional site of 1.3ha on the Naas Road in SLO1 reserved for future possible education use. A site if this site would be suitable for up to a 16 classroom school.

2. Noted. Option would be available (as detailed under Point 1) should an alternative site be required.
3. Noted
4. While this point is noted, the suggestion for policy support special education needs is not considered appropriate to a land-use plan; the plan does not distinguish between education users types but support all education and care development at appropriate locations
5. Noted.
6. Noted.

#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



<b>Item 3 Education Objectives</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The department notes and welcomes Social Infrastructure Objective BLESS24 that the Council will resist developments that entail the loss of existing education lands or building and developments that would unduly constrain the ability of existing schools to expand will not be permitted.</li> <li>2. The department notes and welcomes Social Infrastructure Objective BLESS25 that the Council will 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.</li> <li>3. The department notes the section Active Travel in the Local Transport Assessment that it is a Council objective to improve pedestrian infrastructure along all roads within Blessington prioritising all locations within 15 minutes' walk times of school. The department supports the development of sustainable travel links between schools and residential areas.</li> </ol>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



<b>4.1.8 Environmental Protection Agency</b>
The EPA has provided a detailed document providing key EPA recommendations for Local Authorities to consider when carrying out SEA and AA of land use plans at county and local level.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
This document and the advice / data therein is addressed in Section 5 SEA and AA of this report.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
See Section 5 SEA and AA of this report.



<b>4.1.9 Office of Public Works OPW</b>
<b>Item 1 Preamble</b>
<p>The OPW, as lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.</p> <p>This submission is made specifically concerning flood risk management. Further submissions on the Draft Local Area Plan may be made by the OPW concerning the estate portfolio, heritage and other areas of responsibility.</p> <p>The OPW welcomes the acknowledgement of the Guidelines and the preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 2 Flood Zone Mapping &amp; Flood Risk Assessment Stages</b>
<p>It is difficult to assess whether the sequential approach has been followed without the inclusion of flood zone mapping overlaid on lands use zoning mapping.</p> <p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should, among other outputs, identify principal rivers, and the location of any flood risk management infrastructure. Wicklow County Council might consider including discussion on the study area, including sources of risk such as watercourses in the town.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
The SFRA prepared overlays the flood risk maps and the zoning maps throughout the assessment. However if this is not sufficiently clear, additional maps can be provided. Maps can be enhanced to more clearly identify principal rivers, and the location of any flood risk management infrastructure.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
<p><b>Insert at end of SFRA –</b></p> <p>Map 1 Flood Risk Zones (Present day)</p> <p>Map 2 Flood Risk Zones (Future Climate Change Scenario)</p> <p>Map 3 Overlay of Flood Maps with Zoning Map</p>



<b>Item 3 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)</b>
<p>The Guidelines recommend that the SFRA provide guidance on the likely applicability of different SuDS techniques for managing surface water run-off at key development sites.</p> <p>The Guidelines also recommend that the SFRA identifies where integrated and area based provision of SuDS are appropriate in order to avoid reliance on individual site by site solutions.</p> <p>Discussion on linear green space on a vacant site between 'The Forge' and the Market House/Credit Union which widens into a larger public realm/green square is noted. Wicklow County Council may consider whether this might offer opportunities for integrated area based provision of SuDS.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>The SFRA sets out a schedule of 'mitigation objectives' in Section 4.3, which includes the following County Development Plan objective, which will apply in the plan area:</p> <p><i><b>CPO 14.13</b> Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design; Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.</i></p> <p>The Council SuDS policy and development guidance sets out a range of SuDS techniques for managing surface water, that will be applied at development sites through the Development Management process. It is not considered necessary to re-state or insert the entire Wicklow County Council SuDS document into the SFRA or the LAP in this regard.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 4 Construction, Replacement or Alteration of Bridges and Culverts over Watercourses</b>
<p>Road objectives that cross watercourses have been referenced in the Draft Plan, including Blessington Demesne Link Road and Blessington Inner Relief Road (southern section).</p> <p>It should be noted that there are restrictions on the construction, replacement or alteration of bridges and culverts over any watercourse, and that appropriate consent from the Commissioners is required under Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted. This would be a matter pertinent to any development application / consent procedure.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

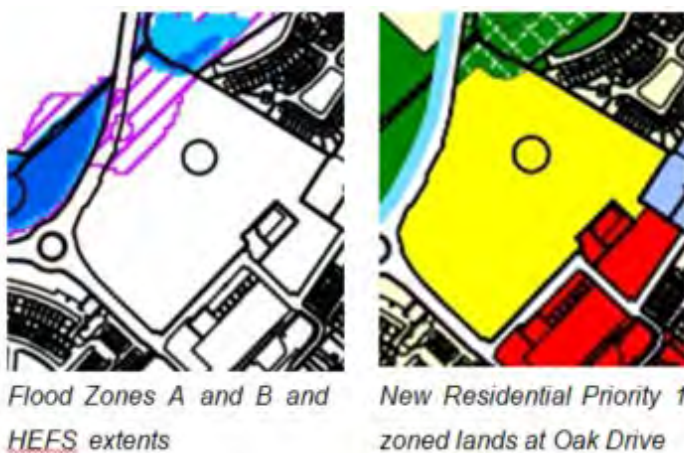


### Item 5 Consideration of Climate Change Impacts

The OPW welcomes the discussion on flood risk and climate change in section 5 of the SFRA, and the inclusion of future scenario extents on the flood zone mapping. It is noted therein that while the increase in fluvial flood extent generally affects already developed areas, *"Where green field land is affected by future scenario flood mapping, the sites are generally large enough such that the development of desired uses may avoid development in the at risk area utilising the sequential approach in site planning. In some cases, zonings have been changed to more appropriate uses."*

In line with the Guidelines, while Flood Zones are defined on the basis of current flood risk, planning authorities need to consider such impacts in the preparation of plans, such as by avoiding development in areas potentially prone to flooding in the future, providing space for future flood defences, specifying minimum floor levels and setting specific development management objectives.

An area zoned for highly vulnerable New Residential – Priority 1 has been shown as at risk in both the mid-range and high-end future scenarios. Wicklow County Council might provide further detail regarding how risk to this area might be mitigated.



### Chief Executive Response

With respect to the lands in question, a small area is identified as being at 'present day' risk and these lands are zoned open space'. However, there are lands proposed to be zoned for new residential development RN1 located in the mid-range and high-end future scenarios.

The draft LAP objectives already provide that where land is zoned for development, but future scenario flood mapping indicates a risk of flooding, a site specific flood risk assessment will be required. This objective can however be strengthened to address the concerns raised.

### Chief Executive Recommendation

Amend the following objective:

#### Section B.7 Infrastructure

##### 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 SFRA.~~

~~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.



#### **Item 6 Justification Tests**

The OPW welcomes the inclusion of plan making justification tests in the draft plan.

Part 3 of the Plan Making Justification Tests included in the SFRA notes in all cases that *"Assessment of flood risk has been incorporated into the Plan SEA Process"*. Part 3 of the Plan Making Justification Test as set out in the Guidelines is that *"A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed, and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere"*. This is a requirement that in order to satisfy the Justification Test, it must be demonstrated that it is feasible to develop the lands in question safely. Any requirements, mitigations or limitations required to ensure the lands can be safely developed should be included and transposed into the draft plan as policy objectives, and this should not be passed on to development management.

All criteria of the Plan Making Justification Test must be demonstrably satisfied for a zoning to be considered justified. Criterion 2 (iii) is a requirement that in order for the test to be satisfied, the zoning must be located either within the core of a settlement, or adjoining the core. A proposed or existing development in such a zoning which might *"serve all parts of established or designated urban settlements, including the core"* does not satisfy this requirement, unless the proposed zoning is within or adjoining the core.

#### **Chief Executive Response**

The SFRA sets out the policies, objectives, requirements, mitigations etc that are already provided for in the Wicklow County Development Plan (Section 4.3 of the SFRA). These requirements will directly apply in the LAP area, being requirements / objectives of the County Development Plan which is 'parent' plan to this LAP. It is not considered necessary to re-state all of the County Development Plan flood risk management related measures in this LAP as they already apply in the plan area.

With respect to the Justification Test criteria, the OPW has not identified any specific deficiencies in this regard with respect to the Blessington LAP SFRA.

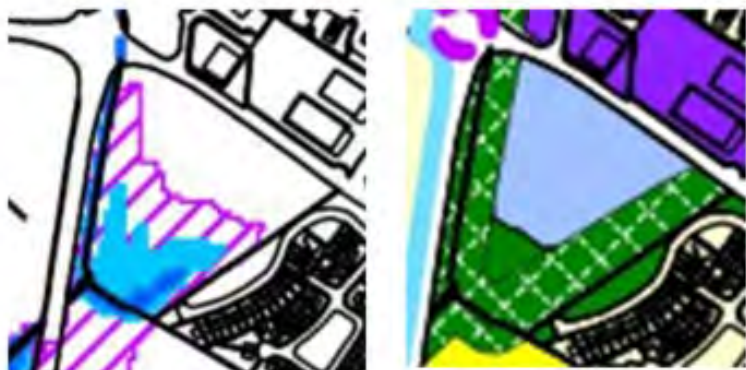
#### **Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



### Item 7 Community & Education Zoned Lands

An area of undeveloped lands overlapping with Flood Zone B has been zoned Community & Education, which can allow for highly vulnerable development such as schools and nursing homes. No commentary has been included to demonstrate whether this zoning has been assessed against the criteria of the Plan Making Justification Test. Highly vulnerable development is not appropriate in Flood Zone B unless the planning authority can demonstrate that all criteria of the Plan Making Justification Test have been satisfied.



*Flood Zones A and B*

*Community & Education  
Zoned Lands at Oak Drive*

### Chief Executive Response

The zoning of CE lands at this location, on the south side of Oak Drive, has been amended significantly from the previous plan; in the previous plan these lands were fully zoned 'E – Employment' whereas the new draft plan shows the lands zoned for the mixture of OS - Open Space and CE – Community & Education.

The OS zones cover the area at 'present day' flood risk. No part of the CE zone is within the 'present day' flood risk and therefore did not require to be subject to a Justification Test in accordance with the Guidelines.

It is noted that some of the proposed CE lands are identified as at risk in the mid-range and high-end future scenarios. The draft LAP objectives already provide that where land is zoned for development, but future scenario flood mapping indicates a risk of flooding, a site specific flood risk assessment will be required. This objective can however be strengthened to address the concerns raised.

In addition, it should be noted that the draft LAP does not specify exactly what form a CE use may take on these lands, and a wide range of possibilities would be available under the CE zoning (ranging from parks / open spaces / sports facilities and graveyards, to schools, churches and nursing homes), and therefore it is not possible to say at plan making stage whether any potential use would be acceptable or not in accordance with the Guidelines given the level of flood risk identified.

### Chief Executive Recommendation

Amend the following objective:

#### Section B.7 Infrastructure

##### 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 SFRA.

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.



#### 4.1.10 Health Service Executive HSE

##### Item 1 Introduction

The National Environmental Health Service (NEHS) has drafted this consultation to support Wicklow County Council deliver a local area plan for Blessington that protects and promotes population health. The Blessington Local Area Plan (hereafter referred to as the Plan) should fit the vision of the Healthy Ireland Framework *"where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health wellbeing to the their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility"*

The following observations are made under the remit of Healthy Ireland and relevant health supporting policies, strategies and plans. It should be read in conjunction with the submission made during the pre-draft consultation phase. The HSE submission during the pre-draft consultation phase was submitted to Wicklow County Council on April 2nd 2024 under our reference number EHIS 3740. For ease of review the key submission elements from the pre-draft consultation phase are included at the end of this submission.

The observations below are primarily informed by a review of the written statement of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025. The written statement is sub-divided into Part A and Part B addressing several issues, such as infrastructure, that have the potential to impact on public health.

It is noted that the purpose of the plan is to put in place a land use framework that will guide the future sustainable development of the Blessington Area. It was also noted that the issues of Healthy Place making, Climate Change and Economic Opportunity are stated as Strategic Goals and over-arching cross-cutting themes of the Wicklow County Development Plan.

While the purpose of the plan is to guide the future sustainable development of the Blessington Area, specific reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was not found in the literature reviewed.

Likewise, little direct reference could be found to the issues of Healthy Place making and Climate Change in the draft plan. Reference is made under A2.0 where it is stated that place making integrates with the creation of sustainable communities which includes

- Housing
- Sustainable Mobility
- Healthy Town Centres

##### Chief Executive Response

As set out in the introduction to the draft LAP: *'The majority of policies, objectives and development standards that will apply in the Blessington area are already determined in the Wicklow County Development Plan and all efforts shall be made to minimise repetition of County Development Plan objectives in this Local Area Plan, other than the summary provided in Section A.2, unless it is considered necessary to emphasise assets or restate objectives that have particular relevance and importance to the area. While this will facilitate the streamlining of this plan to just those issues that are relevant to this area, and an overall reduction in the content of the plan, this should not be seen a diminution of the level of importance or indeed protection afforded to this area.*

*In particular, development standards, retail strategies, housing strategies etc that are included in the County Development Plan shall not be repeated, and shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Local Area Plan. Any specific policies / objectives or development standards required for this area will be stated as precisely that, and in all cases will be consistent with the County Development Plan. Thus development standards will therefore be the same across the entire County, and any differences for specific settlements would be clear and transparent, to both those adopting the plans, and the general public alike.*

*It is also important to note that the land-use objectives of this plan aim to support other plans and strategies prepared by Wicklow County Council, including the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan, Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, Wicklow Heritage Plan etc., all which have a wider remit than this LAP. However, this Local Area Plan shall only include objectives that are area specific and achievable, and avoid those that are aspirational or are best dealt with in the annual budget, road works programme,*



*etc. The role of land use plan is to put in place a framework within which development can occur, but does not decide what works actually get done by either private individuals or public bodies. The delivery of objectives will be determined by the initiation of private development or by the allocation of public funding through the annual budgetary process, which is a separate process to any land use plan’.*

In this regard, the County Development Plan addresses high level strategy matters as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and integrates them where relevant into Strategic Policy Objectives and County Policy Objectives, that apply directly in the LAP area and shape its contents. It is not considered necessary to re-state in each LAP the international, national or regional strategies that have shaped the County Development Plan.

<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



<b>Item 2 Town Centre Regeneration</b>
<p>One of the few places where direct reference is made to healthy place making is under the Town Centre and Retail objectives where an objective set is to <i>"promote healthy place making and prioritise walking and cycling....."</i> Elsewhere in this section emphasis is placed on <i>"integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being"</i>.</p> <p>Key to delivering on healthy place making and providing a community where people can enjoy a high quality of life and well-being is to start by understanding the determinants of health for the people of Blessington, and how those determinants can be addressed to protect and promote public health and therefore deliver on the objectives.</p> <p>It is recommended that Wicklow County Council include an assessment of health determinants for the Blessington area that in turn will inform a Local Area Plan that delivers on the objectives set. This assessment would identify hazards/risks for the people of the Blessington Area (not just floods) and identify ways in which health co-benefits can be delivered in meeting climate action obligations for example.</p> <p>Sustainable mobility for example will be one component to deliver a more active population and better air quality. This in turn will help deliver health gain in the area of cardio-vascular and respiratory health.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>While the delivery of a healthy County and settlement is at the core of both the Wicklow CDP and the LAP, these plans are not the 'health improvement plans' for these areas. There is no requirement or advice that an 'assessment of health determinants' be carried out as part of land use plan making.</p> <p>As identified in the submission, the plan making process does however address a significant number of components that contribute to human health and well-being, such as the provision of a more compact settlement where active modes of travel become more feasible and attractive, and the delivery of enhanced community facilities including parks and sports grounds.</p> <p>In addition, given the short time frame available to the CE to prepare this report and make recommendations with regard to possible amendments to the draft plan, it would not be feasible to carry out such a detailed assessment (if one were considered necessary) for integration in to the plan.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



### Item 3 Social and Community Development

Part A 2.6 of the written statement addresses Social and Community Development issues of relevance to the protection and promotion of public health. An important objective set in this regard is *"to support the creation of functional and healthy public spaces and pedestrian routes within..... to maximise opportunities for outdoor activities"*

The objectives set under Social and Community Development could be expanded to include for example the provision of green and blue spaces to support mental health objectives in addition to supporting outdoor activities.

In addition greater emphasis could be put on to ensure these spaces are inclusive and deliver on the needs for all of all ages.

### Chief Executive Response

It is considered beyond the remit of a land-use plan to distinguish between types of 'health' (i.e. physical, mental etc) in its provisions. As above, this LAP is not the Council's health promotion plan, but it one element of an overall suite of plan and strategies, by both the Council and range of other State agencies, that contribute to overall societal well-being.

With respect to delivering spaces for all in society, the Wicklow CDP explicitly address this matter with the following objectives and text:

#### 7.2 Community Development & Land Use Planning

*The term "community development" refers to a complex and broad range of actions and measures involving a wide range of practitioners and bodies with the common aim of improving various aspects of local communities. There are however two key strands to the development of 'sustainable communities':*

- *Facilitating communities in developing the skills, capacities and projects needed to enable them to have a greater say in the management of their own futures; and*
- *Facilitating access to the goods, services and powers structures within society for all, and particularly for those that are marginalised and powerless ('social inclusion').*

*A wide range of stakeholders and agencies will be required to deliver the LECP goals. It is the role of the LCDC to coordinate the various organisations and actions required to fulfil the goals of the LECP. The County Development Plan plays the following roles in delivering these goals:*

1. *Facilitating the delivery of community infrastructure through:*
  - *Identifying where possible community / social infrastructure deficiencies and needs of towns and villages including, for example, local community centres, schools, health facilities, broadband hubs, remote working facilities in community spaces, age-friendly facilities such as accessible internet spaces and increased post /delivery and collection facilities;*
  - *The reservation of land for the development of new or enhanced social and community infrastructure in County and local development plans where a need for new facilities is identified;*
  - *Managing the expansion of residential development commensurate with the community infrastructure available;*
  - *Requiring the delivery of new community infrastructure as part of development proposals; and*
  - *Cooperating with other service providers in the delivery of new community infrastructure.*
2. *Facilitating improved physical access to community infrastructure and services through:*
  - *Promoting a development pattern that maximises the accessibility of social / community facilities infrastructure by public transport, cycle or foot;*
  - *Requiring all new facilities to be accessible and useable by those with special needs, including mobility or other impairments; and*
  - *Facilitating enhancement of communications infrastructure.*
3. *Facilitating the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of communities, environmental upgrading and general actions to enhance the environmental, amenity and physical attributes of*



communities.

### **Community Facilities Hierarchy Model**

The community facilities hierarchy model, as shown in Table 7.1 below, is a list of the social and community facilities that are considered necessary in settlements, according to their population range. It is the role of the development plan to support and facilitate the delivery of such social / community infrastructure; however, the actual delivery of such infrastructure is the responsibility of a wide range of agencies (including the Local Authority) as well as private developers as part of a development proposal.

Where a new significant residential or mixed-used development is proposed, the Planning Authority may require certain social and community facilities to be provided as part of the proposed development and/or may require a special financial contribution to be made to contribute to the development of such facilities.

In the development management process, the Planning Authority will determine whether there is a need for a particular development to include the provision of a social or community facility by either:

- a) Considering the particular social infrastructure needs and deficiencies of each location and the appropriateness of the particular proposed development as to whether the deficiency needs to be rectified as part of that development proposal; or
- b) Requiring a 'Social Infrastructure Audit' (SIA) to be carried out by the developer, to determine if facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents and where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.

With any significant residential development, the applicant will be required to prepare a SIA as part of the documentation required as part of the planning application process. The importance of a SIA is in assessing the impact a large scale residential development may have on the existing social infrastructure in the area, and to identify if any deficiencies exist that will be compounded or put under undue stress by the proposed development. A SIA assesses the overall impact a residential development will have on the infrastructure which is key to the functioning of the community. This is generally assessed based on the percentage increase of population that a development once completed will bring to the community where the development is planned to occur. While not an exhaustive list these generally include the following infrastructure:

- Transport (bus routes, cycle routes, green infrastructure, road networks, pedestrian pathways);
- Education (third level, post-primary, primary, crèche facilities);
- Health (primary health care, care homes, doctor surgery, G.P, dentist facilities, pharmacy);
- Community facilities (places of worship, burial grounds, community halls, sports facilities).

The applicant shall as part of the SIA be requested to obtain and submit **supporting documentation** from any social / community infrastructure providers, educational institutions, community organisations and other social service providers to be included as part of the audit. The audit shall detail that the potential increase in population that would arise from the proposed development, and take in account other new (permitted and proposed) developments in the area that are intended to be serviced by existing facilities. If the cumulative increase in population cannot be supported by the existing facilities locally, written assurance from the facility providers must be submitted confirming that there shall be sufficient accommodation to support the increased population prior to the commencement of any development.

Furthermore, in recognition of the potentially significant impacts large residential developments may have on the receiving environment the applicant must include any similar type developments to the proposed within the same locality regardless of their stage in the planning process. The cumulative impacts of these developments as well as the proposed shall be included as part of any assessment to determine the suitability of the proposed development.

Where it is determined that existing social infrastructure in an area will not be adequate to accommodate the needs of the new residents, and new infrastructure / facilities are deemed to be required to allow the development to be positively considered, the manner in which the deficiency will be addressed, by who and when, shall be detailed in the proposal, and agreed through the development management process.



*All proposals for community and social infrastructure including public open space should incorporate the principles of Universal Design. Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. New development shall have regard to the provisions of the National Disability Authority's document 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' which provides comprehensive best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size ability or disability.*

**CPO 7.8**      *To promote and support Universal Design whereby all environments and facilities can be used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of age, ability or disability.*

**Chief Executive Recommendation**

No change



#### Item 4 Service Infrastructure

Part A 2.8 of the written statement refers to Service Infrastructure and more specifically transport infrastructure plus infrastructure related to water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure.

The first part of this section places heavy emphasis on transport infrastructure though it lacks specific measures to be adopted in order to deliver on the "Avoid, Shift, Improve" framework introduced in the National Climate Action Plan 2023. Much of the section seems to focus on shifting people from one transport mode to another without detailing ways to avoid the need for travel (e.g. improving communications infrastructure) and improving on some modes of travel by for example supporting EV charging infrastructure, bike libraries, secure bike parking etc.

It is recommended to revisit the provision of transport infrastructure and consider it as part of a wider transition in avoiding the need for travel, shifting to more sustainable modes of travel and improving the sustainability of some existing modes of travel.

Under the aspects of infrastructure outside of the transport the plans refers to the delivery of reliable and effective water, drainage, energy, waste management and communications infrastructure to service the existing and future development needs of the settlement.

Some reference is made to increased resilience in the context of water but this section doesn't adequately consider the role such infrastructure plays in adapting to and being resilient to the hazards posed by climate change as well as the role such infrastructure plays in mitigating green-house gas emissions. It is worth stating that climate change poses the greatest threat to global health this century and therefore all actions in these areas should consider climate action from both a mitigation and adaptation point of view.

More specifically water infrastructure should not only be resilient to all potential hazards, not just climate related, but the water infrastructure should be adapted. For example will rain water harvesting be included as a mechanism in the plan to both adapt to drought like events and reduce dependence on treated water as a mitigation measure?

In the area of wastewater and drainage, embedding climate action from a mitigation and adaptation perspective should be incorporated into the plan. The opportunities to generate clean energy from renewable sources (solar, wind and geothermal) should be incorporated into the plan and waste management should be viewed in the context of a circular economy.

#### Chief Executive Response

##### Transportation

All of the suggestions made, where relevant to a land-use plan, are considered to be addressed either in the LAP, the LTA associated with the plan or the Wicklow CDP (which addresses for example communications, EV infrastructure etc). As detailed in response to other submissions made, it is intended to prepare a **Local Transport Plan** for Blessington after the adoption of this plan, which can flesh out these areas in more detail.

##### Water / Energy / Waste Management

All of the suggestions made, where relevant to a land-use plan, are considered to be addressed either in the LAP or the Wicklow CDP (which addresses for example effective management of wastewater, flood risk management, water demand reduction, renewable energy strategies, energy demand reduction, waste management etc). It should be noted however that the LAP is not the Council's water or waste 'management plan' nor the Council's 'climate action plan' or 'renewable energy plan' but as detailed above, it is plan that forms a suite of plans that aim to address such areas.

#### Chief Executive Recommendation

No change



## Item 5 Community Development

Part B.5 Community Development covers a number of issues including Health and Care plus Leisure and Recreation. The Health and Care section refers to health and social care facilities such as GP surgeries, nursing homes and childcare facilities. The Leisure and Recreation section refers to sports, children's play, facilities for teenagers and adults.

This interpretation of health and leisure/recreation is perhaps limited in viewing health as being about health infrastructure and likewise for leisure recreation.

The NEHS recommends that the draft plan take a more holistic view of community development, to view the protection and promotion of health and physical activity as dependent on a more enabling environment. This would in practice mean that everyone takes responsibility for the protection and promotion of public health and that for example, would view the construction of bus shelters as a health protection measure (protecting people from harmful weather including UV radiation from sun exposure). Other actions might be supporting public transport infrastructure that enables people to access health care and recreational facilities via a more sustainable mode of transport and/or providing incentives/subsidies to encourage all to access recreational facilities. In other words viewing use of such facilities are a behavioural issue as much as an infrastructure issue.

An additional aspect to consider is the building of community resilience, to climate change for example, as a part of community development. Others may refer to the term "Climate Literacy" through citizen engagement. An example would be to apply the principles of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for known severe weather hazards such as floods by for example establishing Early Warning Systems and being prepared for such events through evacuation plans for example.

### Chief Executive Response

It is not quite clear what the HSE is suggesting for the LAP under this heading. This LAP is not the Council's community development or community resilience improvement 'plan' or 'strategy'; but as detailed above, it is plan that forms a suite of plans, including for example the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), that aim to contribute to such areas.

In terms of the definitions of community / social development, the LAP is guided in this regard by the County Development plan, which provides that (as already detailed above):

*The term "community development" refers to a complex and broad range of actions and measures involving a wide range of practitioners and bodies with the common aim of improving various aspects of local communities. There are however two key strands to the development of 'sustainable communities':*

- *Facilitating communities in developing the skills, capacities and projects needed to enable them to have a greater say in the management of their own futures; and*
- *Facilitating access to the goods, services and powers structures within society for all, and particularly for those that are marginalised and powerless ('social inclusion').*

*A wide range of stakeholders and agencies will be required to deliver the LECP goals. It is the role of the LCDC to coordinate the various organisations and actions required to fulfil the goals of the LECP. The County Development Plan plays the following roles in delivering these goals:*

- *Facilitating the delivery of community infrastructure*
- *Facilitating improved physical access to community infrastructure and services*
- *Facilitating the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of communities, environmental upgrading and general actions to enhance the environmental, amenity and physical attributes of communities.*

It is in accordance with these three headings that the objectives of the LAP with regard to community development are framed. It is accepted that improved transportation services and infrastructure can contribute to community wellbeing, and hence why it is addressed in some detail in the Wicklow CDP, this LAP and the LTA supporting the plan.

### Chief Executive Recommendation

No change



<b>Item 6 Infrastructure</b>
<p>Part B7 addresses the topic of Infrastructure placing priority on the three areas of (a) Sustainable Transport, (b) Flood Risk Management and (c) Wastewater Infrastructure. Some observations have been made under Service Infrastructure above but here some emphasis is put on risk assessment.</p> <p>The NEHS recommends that a risk assessment including a climate change risk assessment (CCRA) is undertaken to determine the threats posed to the people of Blessington and its surroundings. This should go beyond Flood Risk Management but extend to other potential hazards (i.e. windstorms, heat, drought and other slower onset hazards such as aeroallergens). It is suggested to utilise the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in assessing hazards, vulnerability and capacity.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>It is not clear if the HSE understands fully the function and nature of a Local Area Plan, its required contents under legislation and guidance etc but it is not the role of a Local Area Plan to provide a 'climate change risk assessment' or to provide a strategy for 'disaster risk reduction'. This may be a suggestion that would be more appropriately directed to the Climate Action team for consideration.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 7 Measuring Progress</b>
<p>The review of the written statement didn't find reference to ways in which progress will be measured during and at the end of the plan?</p> <p>To help assess the delivery of the plan on the strategic goal "Healthy Placemaking" the NEHS recommends that a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is developed with health specific metrics incorporated. Metrics to include may relate to air quality, water quality, noise levels, temperature variations in areas potentially prone to the urban heat island effect, etc. The indicators set should be SMART with baseline measurements established for comparison with during and at the plans lifetime.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>The draft LAP includes an Implementation Appendix, which on foot of other submissions, it is recommended be enhanced. The SEA associated with the LAP also detailed Monitoring Measures, Indicators and Targets for various environmental components.</p> <p>The Wicklow Forward Planning Department has recently established a development plan monitoring unit and is currently working on building a plan monitoring and development pattern tracking system. It is intended that this system will be functional in 2025, and at that time, all objectives of this LAP will be inputted in order to allow for systematic monitoring to be established.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



<b>Item 8 Pre-Draft Submission</b>
<p>The HSE has appended their pre-draft plan submission. This submission set out in some detail advice from the HSE with regard to the following topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate change</li> <li>- Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>- Disaster Risk Management including Disaster Risk Reduction</li> <li>- Inclusiveness</li> <li>- Physical Activity/Sustainable Movement</li> <li>- Air Quality</li> <li>- Energy</li> <li>- Noise</li> <li>- Water Quality and Waste Water</li> <li>- Circular Economy/Waste</li> <li>- Sustainable/Healthy Diets</li> <li>- Tobacco and Disposable Vapes Free Ireland</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
<p>The pre-draft submission was considered carefully by the plan team in the preparation of the draft plan and advice / recommendations integrated in to the draft LAP or associated appendices where relevant.</p> <p>A number of the suggestions however were found to be either already addressed in the Wicklow County Development Plan, were more relevant to plans of other departments of the Council or other State agencies, or not applicable to this type of plan.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



<b>4.1.11 Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)</b>
<b>Item 1 Preamble</b>
<p>UÉ is responsible for the provision of public water supply, wastewater collection and treatment services. It is an objective of UÉ to provide both drinking water and wastewater capacity to support national, regional and local economic and spatial planning policy (subject to the constraints of the UÉ Capital Investment Plan).</p> <p>UÉ acknowledges the planning policy and direction provided in the National Planning Framework and the East &amp; Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and we are committed to supporting the policies therein, subject to budgetary and environmental constraints. In this regard, we would draw your attention to RPO10.1 in the RSES which provides general policy direction in relation to the sustainable management of water resources.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 2 Water Supply and Network</b>
<p>Blessington is supplied from Ballymore Eustace which has capacity. However, it does form part of the overall Greater Dublin Area (GDA) water resource zone that experiences constraints from time to time. UÉ publishes Water Supply Capacity Registers annually for each county. The register is currently being updated and will be revised before the Draft LAP is completed. UÉ will issue the Council a copy of the Water Supply Capacity Register as soon as it is completed.</p> <p>Note the capacity register is only an indication of available capacity at a point in time and will change over the lifetime of the Plan. The long-term solution for the GDA is the Water Supply Project (WSP). The WSP has been identified in the National Planning Framework as a 'National Strategic Outcome' and is also listed as one of the key 'Strategic Investment Priorities' of the National Development Plan</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 3 Wastewater Collection and Treatment</b>
<p>As noted above, the wastewater capacity registers are also being revised and will be available in the coming weeks. UÉ will issue the Council a copy of the Wastewater Capacity Register as soon as it is completed.</p> <p>There is currently sufficient capacity available to service the growth envisaged in the County Development Plan Core Strategy.</p> <p>As above, the register is only an indication of available capacity at a point in time.</p> <p>There are no significant issues with the Blessington sewer network. Uisce Éireann are continually progressing sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities at pump stations, storm water overflow assessments county wide. We will continue to monitor the performance of the networks to ensure that the most urgent works are prioritised as required.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



#### Item 4 Drinking Water Source Protection & Human Health

Protection of public drinking water sources is of the highest priority to Uisce Éireann. It is a requirement of the Drinking Water Directive and the Water Framework Directive that waters used for the abstraction of drinking water are protected so as to avoid deterioration in quality. It is Uisce Éireann's current policy to maintain safe and secure drinking water supplies and that no development will negatively impact drinking water sources.

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

In addition to LAP Objective BLESS42 under Biodiversity and Natural Heritage *"Where relevant, applications for development must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not, individually or cumulatively, affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive."*

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

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

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

#### Chief Executive Response

The CE is happy to recommend additional text and objectives to address the issue raised.

#### Chief Executive Recommendation

**Amend the plan as follows:**

Add the following text and objectives to Section B.7:

The 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.*



### Item 5 Nature Based Solutions for Surface Water Runoff & Water Quality

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

Uisce Éireann recommends the use of the hierarchy of discharge outlined in the recently published guidance document "Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions: Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents" to complement the approach to surface water management set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan. In particular, Uisce Éireann encourages a specific focus on the water quality of surface water runoff collected in Blessington town and discharged either directly to the reservoir or to watercourses which drain to the reservoir. This is applicable to both new developments and to any planned improvements to existing urban spaces.

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

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

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

### Chief Executive Response

The CE is happy to recommend additional text and objectives to address the issue raised.

### Chief Executive Recommendation

**Amend the plan as follows:**

Add the following text and objectives to Section B.7:

The 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.*



<b>Item 6 Blessington Town Centre First</b>
Planned public realm and road projects have the potential to impact on Uisce Éireann assets and projects e.g., tree planting, building over of assets, new connections, requirement to programme upgrade works in advance of road projects. Early engagement in relation to planned road and public realm projects is requested to ensure public water services are protected, enable Uisce Éireann to plan works accordingly and ultimately minimise disruption to the public.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted. This would be a matter for the project teams for any regeneration projects.
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change

<b>Item 7 Planning Applications &amp; Connections to the Uisce Eireann Network</b>
The Planning Authority should continue to refer planning applications for developments through the current planning referral route, for assessment in relation to the protection of drinking water sources. New Planning Applications are to submit an EIAR Scoping Request to Uisce Éireann (for qualifying developments) ahead of lodging a planning application to avoid delays.
All new residential and commercial/industrial developments wishing to connect to a Uisce Éireann network are to be assessed through Uisce Éireann's Connections and Developer Service process which will determine the exact requirements in relation to network and treatment capacity. Connections to Uisce Éireann networks are subject to our Connections Charging Policy. Further information on this process is available at: <a href="https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/">https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/</a>
Uisce Éireann will only process Connection Applications for 'authorised developments'. An authorised development is any development that has been granted planning permission. Queries for the Development Management Planning Team and EIAR Scoping Requests should be sent to <a href="mailto:planning@water.ie">planning@water.ie</a>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>
Noted
<b>Chief Executive Recommendation</b>
No change



## Section 4 Summary and Assessment of submissions

### Section 4.2 Elected Members

#### 4.2.1 Councillor Gerry O' Neill

### Part B.5 Community Development

No.	Name	Issues Raised
237	<a href="#">Cllr Gerry O'Neill</a> <a href="#">Ref 223019</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ That the land zoned in the 2013-2019 Blessington LAP for the extension of the graveyard at Burgage More, Blessington should remain in place for the new 2025 plan.</li><li>▪ There should also be land provided for a car park at the graveyard.</li></ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>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.</p> <p>CPO 7.55 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that it is an objective of Wicklow County Council <i>'To facilitate the development of new, improved or expanded places of worship and burial grounds including natural burial grounds at appropriate locations in the County, where the demand for the facility has been demonstrated.'</i></p> <p>This objective applies countywide including the Blessington plan area and surrounds. This objective does not require burial grounds to be developed within the built up area of a settlement and supports the development of such uses in the vicinity of Blessington including outside the LAP boundary. In this regard it is noted that many new cemeteries are now locating outside settlements, for example Kilternan Cemetery Park in South Dublin, which is an excellent example of a modern cemetery park noting its rural location and peaceful surrounds and where there is little development pressure from other active land uses.</p> <p>It is noted that cemeteries are open for consideration on lands zoned for Mixed Use (MU) and Community &amp; 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.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## Part B.1 Town Centre Regeneration

### B1.1 Blessington Town Centre First Plan

No.	Name	Issues Raised
242	<a href="#">Cllr Gerry O'Neill</a> <a href="#">Ref 225429</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Cllr O'Neill opposes the proposal to remove parking and pedestrianize the Market Square Blessington; hard pressed business people who already pay high rates and tax's may well be forced to close and is certainly no incentive for the new owners of the Ulster Bank ,Downshire Hotel or other business people in the area.</li><li>▪ The proposal by Blessington Town Centre First Plan (draft ,p23) was never suggested to business people in the immediate area and would be unfair without consultation.</li></ul>
244	<a href="#">Cllr Gerry O' Neill</a> <a href="#">Ref 231715</a>	
Chief Executive Response		
<p>The LAP clearly details that the regeneration of the town centre, including public realm improvements in and around Market Square, is a key objective and is essential in order to maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre as the heart of the settlement.</p> <p>With the future diversion of traffic flows onto the completed BIRR, an opportunity exists to carry out significant enhancement to Blessington Main Street and Market Square, with the objective to make the area more pedestrian friendly by reducing through traffic flows, reducing the area of the main street given over to traffic and vehicles and instead providing safe pedestrian and cycling facilities, more pleasant spaces to people to dwell and recreate and more opportunities to do business due to a resultant increased footfall.</p> <p>The LAP does not provide the detail with respect to the design of any future public realm improvements, including any changes to car parking that might be proposed as part of any such future project. Figure B.1.1 is indicative only and should not be considered a final design as outlined in the draft LAP. In this regard the plan only sets out the aims, objectives and standards that any future public realm projects will be required to meet, and any future programme of public realm improvement will be subject to the necessary consent process including where necessary public consultation. This would be the appropriate time for residents and local business owners/operators to give input with respect to changes that might be proposed close to their property.</p> <p>Furthermore, objective BLESS48 of the Draft LAP supports the development of multiple additional car parking locations that could compensate for any rationalisation of car parking on Blessington Main Street/Town Centre thereby ensuring that the level of car parking in the town centre is not reduced as a result of any improvements to the public realm.</p>		
Chief Executive's Recommendation		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025		



#### 4.2.2 Councillor Jason Mulhall

##### Part A Strategy

248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	<p>Submitted that the draft LAP for Blessington is a well-thought-out document, with clear considerations for the different scenarios across various land use objectives. However, for the final document, Cllr Mulhall recommends the following:</p> <p><b>Clarify the Purpose and Title of the Document</b>  Submitted that the title Blessington Local Area Plan is misleading and should be stated as a land use zoning framework.</p> <p>It should be evident in the document that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The zoned lands are largely in private ownership, and there is no requirement for individuals or developers to commit to the proposed uses.</li> <li>▪ The LAP does not have supporting funding or specific timelines for implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhance Zoning Colour Scheme</b>  Requested that the Zoning colour scheme is enhanced. Submitted that the current colour scheme is confusing with regards to existing facilities, and new zoning objectives for CE, AOS, and OS1 zones. Differentiating these by using distinct colors or patterns would provide for clarity.</p> <p><b>Residential Development</b>  Although the intent behind RN1 and RN2 zoning is well understood, the LAP needs to incorporate, criteria and expectations related to the sequencing of RN1 development in a way to ensure RN2 is not hindered and impacted negatively.</p> <p><b>Introduction of a RN3 Category</b>  A RN3 category could be introduced, taking into consideration and planning for the need for potential future housing that might be required before the end of the proposed plan. This would provide flexibility in addressing future residential demands.</p> <p><b>Cross County Co-ordination</b>  The plan overlooks the impact of residential development within Kildare on the Blessington community. To address this, the lands in Kildare should be included in consultation with Kildare County Council and zoning in Kildare's Development Plan should align with Blessingtons needs. The existing Blessington LAP boundary cuts off residential and other developments within County Kildare, which would clearly be part of the everyday functional relationship with the Blessington community.</p> <p>Noted that there are number of towns in Ireland where cross county collaboration has been implemented for example Drogheda (Louth and Meath), Athlone (Westmeath and Roscommon), Carrick on Shannon (Leitrim and Roscommon), and indeed Bray (Wicklow and Dublin).</p>
-----	--	---



## Chief Executive Response

With regard to the title of the plan, a Local Area Plan is a statutory document pursuant to Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). It is recognised that under the new Planning and Development Act 2024, the title of such plans will change however while this new planning legislation was signed into law by President Higgins on 17 October 2024, it is not yet in force. Until such time the title Local Area Plan will apply.

The residential zoning provisions of the draft LAP have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with the NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the population and housing targets of the Core Strategy, as set out in the County Development Plan.

With regard to the concerns raised regarding the RN2 zoned lands been hindered or impacted upon negatively by the sequencing and phasing of the RN1 zoned lands it should be noted that the development of phase 2 'RN2' lands is not solely linked to the full / majority development of RN1 lands and the key factor affecting the developability of RN2 lands is consistency with the housing targets of the Wicklow Core Strategy, which at this time are met. However, it is noted that the section of the Draft LAP relating to phasing under Part B.8 Zoning states the following with regard to the development of RN1 zoned lands:

*"In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned residential 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 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".*

In this regard it is noted that Objective BLESS7 does not make reference to 75% of the Priority 1 lands been activated but states "Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated)" which would suggest that all of the RN1 lands need to be activated prior to permission been considered on RN2 lands. In this regard it is recommended that BLESS7 is amended 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.*

A the key design aim in delivering sustainable communities is to reduce, as far as possible, the need to travel, particularly by private car, by facilitating mixed-use development and by promoting the efficient use of suitable land. The sequential approach specifies that zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped serviced lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference, encouraging infill opportunities, and that areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

Therefore, with regard to introducing a third residential development phase RN3, this would effectively act as a land bank for future residential development beyond that envisaged in the draft LAP and result in the zoning of additional excess residential lands which would be contrary to The Development Plan Guidelines of June 2022, the NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives as noted above. In



addition the NPF 'Tiered Approach' to zoning and NPO72c, where land is not serviced, and not likely to be serviced within the lifetime of the plan, they should not be zoned.

In the drafting of the LAP the existing and future projected population of the area of Blessington located within the boundary of Kildare County Council was included in the existing and future population figures in the Social Infrastructure Audit. The land use zonings in this area of Blessington are under the remit of Kildare County Council and were adopted as part of the 2023-2029 Kildare County Development Plan process. Wicklow County Council gave full consideration to the land use zonings located in the Kildare jurisdiction of the settlement of Blessington in the crafting of the draft LAP.

With regard to the drafting of a cross county plan, is noted that the area of Blessington located in the jurisdiction of Kildare County Council is currently relatively small in comparison to the area of the settlement located in the jurisdiction of Wicklow County Council. There are a number examples of town plans of towns in Ireland where cross county collaboration has been implemented however it is noted that these plans generally relate to much larger settlements in excess of 20,000 people or involve a settlement where greater distribution of the settlement across the two jurisdictions. Wicklow County Council and Kildare County Council work is close collaboration with one another and the Blessington LAP has been drafted in consultation with Kildare County Council. It is acknowledged that in the future there may be a need to establish a joint plan for Blessington between Kildare and Wicklow if the population of the town significantly increases and/or the portion of the settlement in Kildare significantly increases.

For clarity the zoning provisions of the Kildare County development plan, as they relate to Blessington can be shown on the plan maps.

With regard to the colours used on the zoning maps every effort is made to ensure that the all maps associated with the Draft Plan area as clear and easy to follow as possible. It is recognised that the zoning maps have to convey a lot of information on one drawing. The zoning maps are underlaid with the most up to date OS mapping to show existing development in the settlement with undeveloped/greenfield sites generally shown with no building outline. It is noted that the maps are often easier to view in hard copy format printed at least A3 or online where persons viewing them can zoom in and out to view in detail particular sites they are interested in.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

Amend the LAP as follows:

Amend Objective BLESS 7 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.*

And;

**Amend Map 1** to include zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development Plan.



### Part B.3 Economic Development

No.	Name	Issues Raised
248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	The MU zoning and SLO4 areas have remain undeveloped since the 2013 LAP. If this condition persists, the community forfeits potential residential, recreational, or economic development. The LAP should provide for contingency plans regarding the underutilization of MU zoned lands to ensure benefits to the community.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
A land-use plan has no direct role in the purchase of and development of lands in the LAP area. This is outside the remit of the LAP, however, it is considered that this plan's role is to ensure the availability of zoned land for various types of development need to support the sustainable development of the settlement and to include objectives facilitating this development in line with Blessington's status as a Level 3 Settlement in accordance with National, Regional and Local Policy.		
Please also refer to <b>Part B.8 Zoning, SLO4 –Doran's Pit</b> of this report.		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.		

### Part B.4 Tourism

#### B.4.1 Greenway

248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	The rejection of the Blessington eGreenway by An Bord Pleanála (ABP) has raised concerns regarding tied infrastructure plans. Suggests revisiting car parking locations, community facilities, and economic opportunities associated with eGreenway to identify a standalone solution following the rejection of the Blessington Greenway.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
While the recently proposed greenway extension project has been refused consent by An Bord Pleanála, the 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.		
In this regard it is recommended that all references in the draft plan for the Blessington Greenway should be amended to '..... <i>future tourism projects in the Blessington Lakes area...</i> '		
It is also recommended that any text relating to the specifics of the refused greenway project should be reviewed and amended as necessary.		
The provisions of the draft LAP, such as those relating to visitor centres, visitor car parking etc are proposed to be maintained in the plan, even in the absence of current greenway project, as such facilities would support a wide range of tourism project and activities.		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
<b>Amend the plan as follows:</b>		
1. All references in the draft plan for the Blessington Greenway should be amended to '..... <i>future tourism projects in the Blessington Lakes area...</i> '		
Any text relating to the specifics of the refused greenway project should be reviewed and amended as necessary		



## Part B.5

## Community Development

248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	<p>For CE and AOS zoning, clear objectives should ensure infrastructure meets community needs. Suggested additions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recreational Facilities: Athletics track, playing pitches, basketball courts.</li> <li>▪ Community Facilities: Scouts den, Community centre, Community allotments.</li> <li>▪ Public Spaces: Dog park, Playgrounds, Dedicated bike track.</li> <li>▪ Active Open Space (AOS) and Open Space (OS1) Ensure adequate land is zoned for AOS to meet community needs and that OS1 zoned land can be readily used.</li> </ul> <p>The previous draft LAP had identified an area for cemetery use, which is missing on the current draft. This ought to be reinstated appropriately under CE zoning, with deliberation from relevant authorities who would identify an appropriate size determination.</p>
249	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 235300</a>	<p>Cllr Mulhall outlines his support that a sufficient land parcel in the town of Blessington is designated to accommodate a 400m running track and associated facilities for track and field events. This facility would be lead by the Lakeshore Striders Athletic Club, but available to all within the community, such as Community Games, schools etc. This should be added as a specific objective of the LAP.</p>

### Chief Executive Response

#### Sports and Community Facilities

It should be noted that the actual delivery of AOS (Active Open Space), the purchase of lands and provision / development of sports facilities / playgrounds / dog parks etc is not the purpose of a LAP. as set out in the introduction to the LAP:

*'The role of land use plan is to put in place a framework within which development can occur, but does not decide what works actually get done by either private individuals or public bodies. The delivery of objectives will be determined by the initiation of private development or by the allocation of public funding through the annual budgetary process, which is a separate process to any land use plan.'*

This is also the case with regard to the development of lands zoned OS1 and CE.

The Social Infrastructure Audit has identified that there is a shortfall of equipped playspaces in the settlement and it is recognised that there is currently no dog park. Casual play spaces and equipped play spaces are most usually permissible under an OS1 'Open Space' land use zoning objective. The Social Infrastructure Audit identified that circa c.27.2ha of AOS and c13.6ha of OS1 (total 40.8ha) would be required to accommodate sports facilities, recreational amenity areas and play spaces to serve the projected 2031 population of Blessington (Co. Wicklow and Co. Kildare) and its catchment. This figure includes existing AOS and OS1 spaces. A total of 46ha has been zoned OS1 and AOS across the draft LAP area comprising of c.23ha AOS and c.23ha OS1. An additional c3.3ha of land is specifically reserved for AOS on SLO4, bringing the total area of lands specifically reserved for AOS to c.27ha. It is further noted that active sports facilities can be developed on TC, CE and other MU lands and not exclusively on AOS zoned lands.

The draft LAP has located proposed AOS on sites where the development of such facilities would not have an adverse impact on any protected sites while still located closes to the town centre and existing and proposed residential areas and schools. OS1 lands have been zoned to complement the location of existing OS1 facilities and close to residential areas and the Town Centre.

In this regard the recent opening of phase 1 of the new town park developed by Cairn Homes is a positive and much welcomed asset to the town by Wicklow County Council and includes an excellent new playground with greenspaces and walks.



It is noted that under the 2013 Blessington Local Area Plan a total of c.25ha of AOS was zoned. The 2013 Blessington LAP had a 2022 target population of 7,500 for the settlement of Blessington (Co. Wicklow). The target population for the settlement of Blessington (Co. Wicklow) under the draft LAP to the year 2031 is lower at 6,313 with c.27ha specifically reserved for the development of AOS.

### **Cemeteries**

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.

CPO 7.55 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that it is an objective of Wicklow County Council *'To facilitate the development of new, improved or expanded places of worship and burial grounds including natural burial grounds at appropriate locations in the County, where the demand for the facility has been demonstrated.'*

This objective applies countywide including the Blessington plan area and surrounds. This objective does not require burial grounds to be developed within the built up area of a settlement and supports the development of such uses in the vicinity of Blessington including outside the LAP boundary. In this regard it is noted that many new cemeteries are now locating outside settlements, for example Kiltarnan Cemetery Park in South Dublin, which is an excellent example of a modern cemetery park noting its rural location and peaceful surrounds and where there is little development pressure from other active land uses.

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.

### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.



## Part B.7 Infrastructure

No.	Name	Issues Raised
248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	<p><b>Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development along the BIRR route should be developed further only in tandem with the completion of the relief road network, including both the Kildare and Wicklow sections.</li> <li>Furthermore, road connections from Blessington GAA roundabout to the Naas Road should be prioritized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Transport</b></p> <p>Public transport through Blessington is very poor. The situation may improve under Bus Connects, but the LAP needs to have goals for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding 65 bus route services and integrating Local Link services.</li> <li>Advocating for specific goals tied to Bus Connects' timeline and delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Parking and Pedestrianisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking is a persistent issue in Blessington. While additional parking is welcomed, it should be strategically located to encourage use and support pedestrianisation.</li> <li>Enhance the town centre by reducing car dominance, creating people-friendly spaces, and improving connectivity between the Main Street and surrounding areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chief Executive Response</b></p> <p>Following the adoption of this LAP, the Local Authority is committing to preparing a Local Transport Plan, which will further detail an overall strategy and programme for addressing any existing transportation issues and supporting further development with appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>The Local Authority is committed to the completion the Blessington Inner Relief by continuing to work with the various transport agencies and developers along the route to progress this project in the short - medium term. With regard to the completion of the BIRR in tandem with any further development along its route, it is noted that the undeveloped lands along the final sections of the BIRR are largely reliant on its construction for access. It is noted that recent residential developments permitted to date along this route have included Transport Impact Assessments as part of their planning application to assess if there is capacity along the existing road network, including the completed sections of the BIRR, to carry the level of development proposed. Where the TIA has indicated that there is not sufficient capacity for all or part of the proposed development, in the event of a grant of permission, holding/phasing conditions have been attached through the development management process. It is therefore considered that the inclusion of such an objective at this time is not required and therefore was not included in the draft LAP.</p> <p>On completion of the BIRR and through the implementation of Objective BLESS48 of the Draft LAP which supports the development of multiple additional car parking locations that could compensate for any rationalisation of car parking on Blessington Main Street/Town Centre, an opportunity exists to carry out significant enhancement to Blessington Main Street and Market Square outlined under Part B.1 'Town Centre Regeneration' of the draft LAP, where it is an objective to make the area more pedestrian friendly by reducing through traffic flows, reducing the area of the Main Street given over to traffic, vehicles and car parking and instead providing safe pedestrian and cycling facilities, more pleasant spaces to people to dwell and recreate and more opportunities to do business due to a resultant increased footfall. Any future programme of public realm improvement will be subject to the necessary consent process including where necessary public consultation.</p> <p>With regard to Public Transport, the Local Authority is committed to continuing to deliver all services / infrastructure within its remit to support the provision of improved public transport services in Blessington and</p>		



to work with the various transport agencies to progress improvement projects.

While the provision of public transport services is beyond the remit of a land use framework such as a local area plan, objective BLESS49 supports the improvement of public transport services and infrastructure, including the delivery of the BusConnects Programme and Connecting Ireland programme as relevant to Blessington.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

### B.6.3 Architectural Heritage

No.	Name	Issues Raised
248	<a href="#">Cllr Jason Mulhall</a> <a href="#">Ref 212745</a>	<b>Architectural Integrity</b> Past planning decisions have resulted in inappropriate building structures that detract from Blessington's character. The LAP should incorporate some architectural guidelines to preserve the integrity of the town and ensure that future developments align with its heritage and aesthetic values.

#### Chief Executive Response

With regard to future development in the ACA of Blessington it is noted that any development in the ACA will be assessed under Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan which refers to Built Heritage. In this regard Objectives CPO 8.10-8.12 refer to the protection and conservation of built heritage in Co. Wicklow while Objectives CPO 8.21-8.24 refer directly to any development proposed in an ACA.

In particular Objective CPO 8.22 requires that *"The design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole"*.

The development of 'local' heritage protection guidelines would not be appropriate or necessary given the detailed guidance already available and implemented as set out in the *'Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (DoAHG 2011).

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025



## SECTION 4.3 GENERAL SUBMISSIONS

### Part A Strategy

#### A.1 General Comments on Plan Structure

No.	Name	Issues Raised
86	<a href="#">Stephen Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 144918</a>	With regard to the zonings for Public Utility, Community and Recreation, Tourism, Active Open Space, Open Space, Natural Areas, Extractive Industry, Blessington is situated in a hugely scenic area of very high amenity but the LAP lacks any kind of vision in that regard. No sense of joined up thinking as each zoning is fragmented and isolated.
134	<a href="#">Eimear Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 164517</a>	Blessington straddles two counties, there would be merit in developing a joint LAP with the current plans not covering areas such as Kilmalum
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	Requesting that Wicklow County Council to consider extending the remit of the plan to includes lands situated in County Kildare and adjacent to the town of which any development will have a profound impact on the integrity of the Local Area Plan under consideration. Submits that the Council are doing themselves a disservice by not producing a joint Local Area Development Plan with Kildare County Council. Having an integrated plan will accurately portray the aspirations of both Councils in facilitating orderly growth. For example, the population targets on page 7 (table 2.2) are very conservative as they exclude developments that are or will take place on the southern edge of the town or close to the route of the bypass near the Cairn Homes site.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>Land use zonings have been located having regard to location, existing adjoining land use zonings, environmental and other sensitivities on the site and adjoining site and access to public utilities and services. Land ownership is not considered in the zoning of lands.</p> <p>In the drafting of the LAP, the existing and future projected population of the area of Blessington located within the boundary of Kildare County Council was included in the existing and future population figures in the Social Infrastructure Audit. The land use zonings in this area of Blessington are under the remit of Kildare County Council and were adopted as part of the 2023-2029 Kildare County Development Plan process. Wicklow County Council gave full consideration to the land use zonings located in the Kildare jurisdiction of the settlement of Blessington in the crafting of the draft LAP.</p> <p>With regard to the drafting of a cross county plan, is noted that the area of Blessington located in the jurisdiction of Kildare County Council is currently relatively small in comparison to the area of the settlement located in the jurisdiction of Wicklow County Council. There are a number examples of town plans of towns in Ireland where cross county collaboration has been implemented however it is noted that these plans generally relate to much larger settlements in excess of 20,000 people or involve a settlement where greater distribution of the settlement across the two jurisdictions. Wicklow County Council and Kildare County Council work is close collaboration with one another and the Blessington LAP has been drafted in consultation with Kildare County Council. It is acknowledged that in the future there may be a need to establish a joint plan for Blessington between Kildare and Wicklow if the population of the town significantly increases and/or the portion of the settlement in Kildare significantly increases.</p> <p>For clarity the zoning provisions of the Kildare County development plan, as they relate to Blessington can be shown on the plan maps.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
Amend Map 1 to include zoning objectives for Blessington from Kildare County Development Plan.		



## A.2 Core Strategy, Population and Housing Targets

Submissions which relate to the rezoning/zoning of lands area addressed under **Part B.8 Zoning** of this report.

	Name	Issues Raised
16	<a href="#">Lesley McGuire</a> <a href="#">Ref 151322</a>	<p>The draft Local Area Plan proposes to divide the housing land that is needed to accommodate the predicted housing need under the CDP core strategy, into two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Lands within the existing built up area: min. 30% no limit on the number of units</li> <li>ii. Lands outside the existing built up area: max. 70%.</li> </ul> <p>Noted that the Local Area Plan does not provide any quantitative targets or capacities in relation to the zoned lands.</p>
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 133645</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disagree with the residential targets shown in the draft plan. The population is already at 5,611 according to the 2022 census.</li> <li>▪ Blessington should remain close to Level 4 settlement. The current population is below the 6,000 threshold for Level 3 settlements.</li> <li>▪ Wicklow County Council is playing with population and population equivalent numbers. Blessington WWTP is authorised to treat for 6,000pe. It's been illegally upgraded to 9,000pe by Uisce Éireann, without approval from EPA.</li> </ul>
21	<a href="#">Thomas Deegan, Honorary Secretary, Ballymore Eustace Trout and Salmon Anglers' Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 144509</a>	
130	<a href="#">Embankment Plastics</a> <a href="#">Ref 163003</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The core strategy of the CDP 2022-2028 has allocated very limited housing growth figures to Blessington between Q3, 2022 and Q2, 2028 which conflicts with the overarching need to deliver housing.</li> <li>▪ The targeted housing growth is based on a population target for Blessington of 6,145 by Q2 2028. However, County Wicklow's population growth has outstripped national change in recent years, with Blessington's population already reaching 5,611 by Q3 2022.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the Council to allocate adequate housing units and by extension, zoned land, to Blessington in order to meet continued growth.</li> <li>▪ Evident shortcomings in the Development Plans Core Strategy</li> </ul>
136	<a href="#">Ventac &amp; Company Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 181627</a>	
153	<a href="#">Dunmoy Properties Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 212157</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is noted that that existing NPF growth estimates and housing targets are under review. This is subsequent to the 2022 Census of Population. The existing NFP estimated the annual rate of population growth in the Country would be 0.9% per annum. The Census indicated that the growth rate was actually 1.3% p.a., with Wicklow growing at 1.5% p.a.</li> <li>▪ Provision will also have to be made for pent up demand which has grown considerably over the last few years as access to the housing market has proved impossible for large numbers of people. This has been heavily influenced by lack of supply.</li> </ul>
174	<a href="#">Kelland Homes</a> <a href="#">Ref 101833</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Section A2.4 (Population and Housing) of the Draft LAP confirms the proposed population and housing targets for Blessington are derived from the County Development Plan 2022-2028.</li> <li>▪ Noted that the County Development Plan was prepared and adopted in advance of the more recent publication of the Draft National Planning Framework in July 2024 (updated November 2024) and in advance of any NPF Roadmap that would identify how the housing growth targets to 2030</li> </ul>



		<p>are to be allocated through the RSES and statutory development plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As such, the growth target allocation of 519 no. units takes no account of the Draft NPF (2024) and Implementation Roadmap, and yet is proposed to remain the growth target for the life of the Blessington LAP to 2031.</li> <li>Submitted that the level of RN1 lands could therefore be increased to address pent up demand.</li> </ul>
208	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 153614</a>	Submitted that residential zoning should be increased as the core strategy will need to be revised as a result of new housing targets published in November 2024 (Updated Draft Revised National Planning Framework).
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 172755</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned that the Draft Blessington LAP de-zones or down-zones significant areas of residential lands as a result of using out of date and inaccurate data and therefore the draft LAP is not robust enough to facilitate adequate housing growth for the town.</li> <li>The County Development Plan inferred that there are potentially 31ha of land that needs to be de-zoned in the LAP, or defer development beyond the period of the Plan. This is contrary to national policy, as outlined in the Development Plan Guidelines, which clearly states that existing zoned and serviceable lands should not be downzoned. This assertion was also made in the context of flawed ESRI population projections.</li> <li>It has been acknowledged by the ESRI that the forecasts and population targets on which the core strategy figures are based are fundamentally flawed, having regard to the overall level of population growth between 2016 and 2022. The NPF targets will be reviewed which will necessitate amendments to the RSES and the core strategies of development plans.</li> <li>The quantum of development land provided in the draft LAP is based on the WCC Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy, using housing targets based on 2016 Census data. The ESRI's revised population projections (2024) for annual housing demand in Wicklow are 66% to 78% higher than their 2020 estimates, demonstrating that housing demand has surpassed the Core Strategy's population targets and estimates of residential zoning need.</li> <li>Submitted that the 'Priority 1' and 'Priority 2' Residential Zonings should be more flexible and support early delivery in accordance with need. Submitted that the Priority 1 lands include many sites that are more expensive and less feasible to deliver. The LAP's phasing strategy does not account for unforeseen impediments and could rule out significant areas from development</li> <li>The phasing of infrastructure delivery must be feasible and connected to development delivery. It is largely based on private sector investment, yet there is no policy connection that appreciates that without development the infrastructure will not be realized.</li> <li>The draft LAP should provide longer term certainty over the development of zoned residential land rather than the incremental approach proposed.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>Blessington has been identified as a Level 3 Settlement 'self-sustaining growth town' in the County settlement hierarchy having regard to its projected population during the lifetime of the 2022-2028 County Development Plan.</p> <p>The town is a strong and active town that acts as the service centre for a wide rural catchment including the villages of Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lackan, Ballyknockan, Dunlavin, Donard and Valleymount (in County Wicklow), Rathmore, Eadestown, Ballymore (in County Kildare) and Brittas in County Dublin. The town is a hub for social, economic and administrative functions in addition to providing places for recreation, worship and</p>		



leisure for its local community and wider rural catchment.

The key design aim in delivering sustainable communities is to reduce, as far as possible, the need to travel, particularly by private car, by facilitating mixed-use development and by promoting the efficient use of suitable land. The sequential approach specifies that zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped serviced lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference, encouraging infill opportunities, and that areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

The residential zoning provisions of the draft LAP have therefore been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with the NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the population and housing targets of the Core Strategy, as set out in the County Development Plan.

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.

Increasing the amount of lands zoned New Residential – Priority 1 (RN1) as suggested in a number of submissions 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).

It should be noted that any revised population figures set out in national policy documentation, including the Draft National Planning Framework 2024, have yet to be finalised and will further need to be transposed through the relevant Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy before a variation to the Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 can be considered. Therefore, only the current prevailing Core Strategy can be considered at this time.

Note that issues raised in relation to the capacity of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plan are addressed in **Part B.7 Infrastructure** and **Part B.8 Housing**.

Land ownership is not considered in the zoning of lands.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



## Part B.1 Town Centre Regeneration and Opportunity Sites

### B.1.1 Town Centre Regeneration

No.	Name	Issues Raised
6	<a href="#">Dan Halpin</a> <a href="#">Ref 161448</a>	Suggests shopfronts in the town centre are tired and inconstant. Suggest a 'brand' look and feel is developed for the town whereby all shopfront must adhere to a set of standards.
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Suggests a shopfront strategy should be introduced to improve aesthetics of businesses. Suggests the use of vacant buildings should be prioritised before new built housing projects. Vacant sites should be re-branded as outlined in the TCF plan. Suggests Town Square should be pedestrianized
195	<a href="#">Gerard Garvey</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Puts forward that the physical composition of the Main Street currently is that it has its back to both the lake and the Newtown shopping centre and that the loss of the main anchor-The Downshire Hotel has had a major impact to the general footfall on the street. Suggest that large-scale reduction in through traffic will facilitate more adventurous use of the road space for pedestrians and cyclists and a re think on parking spaces. There is considerable potential to revitalise the main street and make strong physical connections to the lake and the shopping centre- rather than being hidden out of sight.</li> <li>▪ Suggest ESB cables be undergrounded to transform the appearance of the main street and that future trunk electricity network improvements be placed underground around the bypass.</li> </ul>
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Suggests addition of seating and undergrounding of cables. Suggests vacant sites, especially along the Main Street should be prioritised for housing and urban development, in order to meet housing demand and avoid urban sprawl

#### Chief Executive Response

The majority of the concerns raised and suggestions made would be more relevant for consideration in the development of projects and programmes of the **Town Team** and **Town Regeneration Office** under the **Town Centre Plan** implementation programme and will be brought to the attention of that team.

With respect to **shopfronts**, it is agreed that more consistent and attractive shopfronts can add to the overall look and vibrancy of the town centre; in this regard the County Development plan provides detailed shopfront design standards that are applied where new or revised shopfronts are proposed as part of a development proposals. However, it would not be within the powers of the Planning Authority to require existing and possibly less attractive shopfronts to undertake revisions / upgrades; as above a programme of incentives could be considered under the TCF implementation programme.

With respect to **vacant buildings and sites**, both the TCF and this draft LAP detail support for the regeneration of such sites and the Local Authority will continue to use any powers or supports available to it to tackle vacancy and dereliction, including (but not limited to) the application of the RZLT and Derelict Sites Act.

With respect to **public realm** improvements, including but not limited to the regeneration of Market Square, improved pedestrian / cycling facilities along Main Street, seating, undergrounding of cables etc, this is being driven forward under the TCF programme.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



## B.1.2

## Retail Strategy and Objectives

No.	Name	Issues Raised
252	<p><a href="#">Lidl Ireland GmbH</a> <a href="#">Ref 114350</a></p> <p>Other issues raised in this submission are addressed under <b>Part B.1.3.4</b> below.</p>	<p>It is requested that objective BLESS4 be amended as follows:</p> <p><i>To direct retail development into the <del>Core Retail Area as a first priority, as set out in the town centre, following the sequential approach, and having regard to its role and function as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028</del> (or any update thereof), in line with its position in the County Retail Hierarchy &amp; Strategy. This will be accomplished as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Core Retail Area will be prioritised for high order comparison retail, specialist / niche and small-scale convenience, experiential / leisure retail, non-retail services and associated activities.</i></li> <li><i>There will be no quantitative restriction on the development of retail floorspace within the Blessington <del>Core Retail Area</del>. Town Centre</i></li> <li><i>All developments for additional retail floorspace, which are <del>both</del> outside <del>the Core Retail Area and within Blessington</del> 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.</i></li> <li><i>The development of retail floorspace outside of Blessington Town Centre (as zoned for such purposes) will not be facilitated unless absolutely necessary.</i></li> </ul> <p>In support of this request, the following case is put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The emphasis in relation to a number of town centre and retail policies is unduly weighted towards the core retail area rather than the town centre as a whole</li> <li>The core retail areas is particularly small in size, and is heavily developed and occupied such that its capacity to absorb additional development should not be overestimated;</li> <li>Where retail priorities are not clear, this may lead to opportunities for retail the core retail area for higher order function being lost.</li> </ul>
198	<p><a href="#">Tesco Ireland Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 152659</a></p>	<p>It is requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail policies support future opportunities for retail development ensuring that both existing and future facilities can meet local demand;</li> <li>Flexibility with regard to zoning policies be provided in order to facilitate the provision of scale-appropriate retail floorspace at appropriate locations;</li> <li>While objective BLESS4 is broadly supported, it is requested that flexibility be incorporated to address evolving needs of modern convenience retailers ;</li> <li>While the promotion of the core retail areas is important, it is equally important to allow for the development of appropriately scaled convenience floorspace at suitable locations outside of the town centre, where modern convenience floorplates cannot be accommodated within the established core (having regard to plot size, site layouts, parking requirements, delivery access, flooding etc considerations). In this regard, edge-of-town centre sites must be considered with flexible zoning objectives;</li> <li>In order to attract retailers, it will be important for retail policies to support modern stores are designed to be efficient, spacious and provide a pleasant environment for both colleagues and consumers alike;</li> <li>The plan provides policies and objectives that can spur investment in the convenience retail sector and provides for adequate convenience floorspace within the town;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The plan acknowledges the requirements of modern retailers including appropriate floorplates, car and bicycle parking and servicing access, where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>	
<p>Having carefully considered the contents of these submissions, the CE is satisfied that the TC zoning extent, the core retail area boundary, and the various objectives of both the CDP and the draft LAP are generally appropriate and necessary into order to ensure the immediate and long term protection and enhancement of the centre of Blessington.</p> <p>It is considered wholly appropriate and in accordance with retail planning guidelines and the County Development Plan to emphasize the Core Retail Area as the priority for new retailing in the town. This emphasis does not preclude new retail development outside the core retail area, subject to justification for same via Retail Impact Assessment.</p> <p>In this regard, the proposition that larger scale retailing should be open to consideration outside the town centre zone is not supported as it could undermine the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre, and its role as the heart of the settlement, by diverting trade and activity away from the centre. In this regard, it is clear that there are a number of sites within the TC zone that would be of adequate scale to accommodate larger scale retailing, particularly in the area immediately west of Market Square, subject to appropriate justification. .</p> <p>Therefore the CE is satisfied that the objectives of the CDP and the draft LAP, as set out in the published draft, should be maintained and no change is recommended.</p>	
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>	
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.	



### B.1.3 Opportunity Sites

Submissions that are seeking the rezoning of specific sites area addressed under **Part B.8 'Zoning'** of this report. This section addresses submission which raised issues/concerns specific to the objectives relating to Opportunity Sites identified in the draft LAP.

#### B.1.3.1 OP1

No.	Name	Issues Raised
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 172</a>	<p>It is indicated that the submitter is the owner of 0.5ha in OP1, adjacent to Dunnes Stores. While the submitter is supportive of the objective to realise the potential of the town centre site it is requested that the plan be amended so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mixed use or a specific commercial content is not required;</li><li>▪ There should be no requirement for active uses to all frontages; this requirement is unnecessary, restrictive and may undermine the feasibility of the site and its regeneration potential;</li><li>▪ The text '<i>subject to the provision of active uses to all frontages</i>' be omitted</li></ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>OP1 is located in the very core of the settlement and it a vital bridging site between the Market Square and modern mixed use (shopping / community) development and school further west. It is desired that a significant 'landmark' type development be progressed in this space that attracts people and activity into this area, so that an inactive, unsupervised area does not continue to persist in this central area between two active commercial zones.</p> <p>In this regard therefore it is deemed that active frontages are essential on this site, especially given that this site has frontage onto existing streets and developments that are suffering from inactivity and are in urgent need of revitalisation; therefore it is considered that this objective should be retained. It should be noted however that the plan does not specify that 'active frontages' cannot comprise residential use or must comprise commercial / community use.</p> <p>The objectives for OP1 do not specify a certain quantum of commercial or mixed use in OP1 but given the town centre location and the objectives of the CDP and LAP, non-residential uses (e.g. commercial, retail, tourism, community etc) will be an expected significant component of any such development, particularly at ground floors. Therefore no changes are recommended to the text in this regard.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



No.	Name	Issues Raised
191	<a href="#">Clonmel Enterprises Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 132647</a>	<p>It is indicated that the submitter is the owner of the lands identified as OP6. It is indicated that the submitter is preparing a development proposal for the lands which accords with all objectives set out in the draft plan, other than the objective that the building line be informed by that the Newtown Square apartment to the immediate east – the proposed development's building line is shown further forward (north).</p> <p>It is requested that this provision be amended so that the building line objective is brought forward for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The desired building line would create further enclosure and passive surveillance of the public realm</li> <li>▪ The desired building line would maximize meaningful 'active frontages'</li> <li>▪ The desired building line is taken from the established building line to the west and maintains line of sight from St. Mary's Church to Glen Ding.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The CE has very carefully considered this request and reviewed the objectives for these lands. In this regard, a particular objective for the town's future development overall is to preserve and enhance connectivity between the town and the natural / historical areas surrounding it, in particular Glen Ding Hill and woods. It is apparent that development on this site, along the building line requested, would likely block views of Glen Ding Hill from Market Square and St. Mary's Church and this is not supported.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



No.	Name	Issues Raised
8	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a> <a href="#">Ref 223353</a>	<p>A number of submissions were received with regard to access via Lakeside Downs to OP7. These submissions have been grouped together and summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitters object to access to Main Street via Lakeside Downs</li> <li>Requested that any suggestion of access to the vacant land as described in OP7 via Lakeside Downs be removed from the plan. Submitted that the incidental space in question is in fact private land and the property of the residents of Lakeside Downs. Submitted that it would be grossly unfair as it would impact negatively on those residents who have worked to maintain and improve their own local space.</li> <li>No permission has been requested for such an access not will any such permission be granted.</li> <li>Submitted that the proposal to use private land at Lakeshore Downs to permit vehicular access to the rear area of the Horseshoe Arch on Main Street would have a major impact to the tranquility of the estate, one of the reasons it is so attractive to its residents.</li> <li>It is also put forward that this would have a negative impact on the property value of the estate, and should it be proposed to proceed, this would be detrimental in introducing traffic and pedestrians into an existing cul de sac where there are mixed aged property owners including elderly and children</li> <li>Traffic on the Kilbride road has already increased hugely resulting from the development of the nearby Rectory, allowing for additional development so close to the town centre will only exacerbate the situation.</li> <li>Access through Lakeside Downs would significantly increase traffic into the cul-de-sac</li> <li>Suggested that should additional vehicular access be required to the area behind the Horseshoe, maybe the car park directly to the rear of the AIB building directly off the Main Street would be a better idea.</li> <li>The estate is already subject to significant numbers of non-resident vehicles using the development to turn vehicles. Illegal parking is prevalent outside the entrance to Lakeside Dows. This illegal parking can make it difficult and dangerous for vehicles to take a left turn into Lakeside Downs;</li> <li>If further traffic is added, coming from the west of the entrance, this could cause congestion and safety issues for Lakeside Downs and the Kilbride Road.</li> <li>If an access point from Lakeside Downs into OP7 were provided, this would result in residents have to cross a road to exit Lakeside Downs and this would have resulting safety issues, particularly from large vehicles.</li> </ul>
9	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a> <a href="#">Ref 225750</a>	
10	<a href="#">Blaize Whelan</a> <a href="#">Ref 225858</a>	
17	<a href="#">Lakeside Downs Residents Association CLG</a> <a href="#">Ref 192450</a>	
18	<a href="#">Dermot Eustace</a> <a href="#">Ref 122557</a>	
48	<a href="#">Philip Keleghan</a> <a href="#">Ref 110219</a>	<p>The submitters indicate that they are owners of a property on Main Street that runs to Lakeside Downs, encompassing the archway. The submitters object to the potential development of the OP7 lands for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of the lands are privately owned including laneway, gardens and green space at Lakeside Downs; the laneway is a right of way to preceding properties, not a public road;</li> <li>The lands are made up of multiple private properties, many of which are in use and are not infill / brownfield sites, and are not abandoned or underused;</li> <li>The draft plan proposes removing their out outdoor space including private</li> </ul>
117	<a href="#">Ciara McLoughlin</a> <a href="#">Ref 085256</a>	
125	<a href="#">Jacqueline Somers</a> <a href="#">Ref 145722</a>	
114	<a href="#">Cruise family</a> <a href="#">Ref 122537</a>	



		<p>parking, sheds and garden; if the space is taken from them it would make it virtually impossible to continue living in their home;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No permission has been requested from them for access to the lands and no permission will be granted. It is requested that the suggestion of access to the vacant site their lands should be removed from the plan.</li> </ul>
235	<a href="#">Patrick Quinn</a> <a href="#">Ref 204850</a>	It is suggested that the Horseshoe Arch be closed off and protected by an aesthetic gate and railing limiting access/egress of the 4 directly adjoining properties thus providing a safe and secure area for them because of the proposed inclusion of two alternative access/egress points for the whole of Opportunity Site OP7.

#### Chief Executive Response

The purpose of the identification of 'Opportunity Sites' and associated 'concept plans' is clearly set out in the draft plan as follows: (**emphasis added**)

*'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**. 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'.*

*'For a number of the OPs / SLOs concept sketches are shown in this plan. **These are conceptual only, did not include complete site surveys/analysis, and should not be taken as a definitive guide as to the acceptability or otherwise of any access points, road layouts or building positions/designs**. Any application for permission on said lands must conform to all standards and requirements of the Planning Authority, as set out in this plan and the Wicklow County Development Plan'.*

It is very clear that the draft LAP does not 'propose' any development on the OP7 lands. There is no suggestion that the Council or any other party is proposing 'taking' or developing any private party's lands, for buildings or access roads, or any other infrastructure, without their consent.

The aim of the plan is to identify that these lands may present a development opportunity for infill at this ideal location in the centre of the town, and to set out that design principles / objectives that would apply should any landowner come forward with plans to develop some or all of these lands.

The concept sketch is simply one representation of what could be possible, but clearly this would only be feasible if all landowners were coordinated.

In order to allay the concerns expressed, it is recommended that the concept sketch be omitted from the final LAP and the wording of the objectives for OP7 be amended.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

**Amend the plan as follows:**

##### **BLESS OP7 Horseshoe Arch & 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).~~


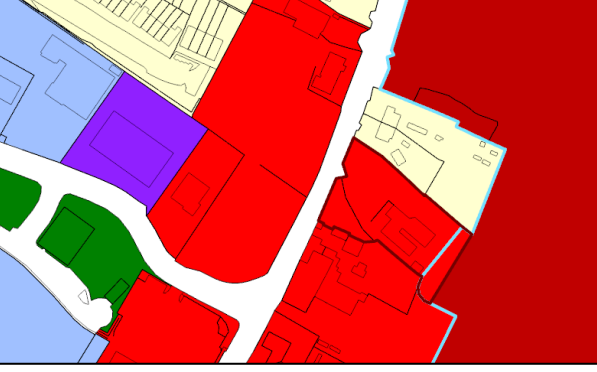


## Objectives BLESS OP7

- 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 and to the rear of the AIB.~~
- ~~Vehicular access (and ancillary pedestrian/cyclist access) into these backlands shall be either via the north-eastern corner of the opportunity site through incidental green space in 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



No.	Name	Issues Raised
252	<a href="#">Lidl Ireland GmbH</a> <a href="#">Ref 114350</a>	<p><b>Request 1:</b></p> <p>It is requested that lands of c. 0.3ha, zoned RE 'Existing Residential' and MU 'Mixed Use' in the Draft Plan, be zoned TC 'Town Centre'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Draft LAP proposes to preserve the pre-existing zoning, and includes the subject lands in opportunity site OP8.</li> <li>▪ The zoning pattern is less than optimal for the future development of the subject lands, with both the existing residential and mixed use areas being subsidiary in area and function to the primary town centre element.</li> <li>▪ The additional area to be zoned town centre is 0.4ha, and TC 'Town Centre' lands have been omitted elsewhere in the draft LAP (e.g. lands to the north of the existing Dunnes stores site), reducing the town centre footprint.</li> <li>▪ The TC 'Town Centre' zoning extends further north (by c.120m) opposite the subject site, up to and including Blessington Tyre Centre, creating an imbalance in this regard.</li> <li>▪ Haylands House has been acquired and assembled within the overall subject lands. The TC 'Town Centre' zoning should be extended to reflect the subject lands potential and to encourage the redevelopment of the Haylands House element. The existing residence on the site represents a low intensity form of development and does not contribute to the creation of streetscape at the gateway to the town.</li> <li>▪ Preservation of the existing character should not be encouraged while also including the lands in OP8 indicating that the lands should be redeveloped.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP (RE lands in dark brown):</b></p>  <p><b>Rezoning Request (site outlined in dark brown):</b></p> 



## Request 2:

It is requested that the opportunity site designation for the subject lands OP8, be amended to reflect an extended TC 'Town Centre' zone, and be split in two to facilitate staged development of the overall Haylands landbank, as follows:

### BLESS OP8 East of Main Street (North)

*This site is comprised of a combination of a 20th century suburban dwelling with a commercial complex of outbuildings and older vernacular building north of the Maxol service station on Blessington Main Street / N81. The lands have been assembled in single ownership and are currently in vacant possession pending redevelopment proposals being brought forward.*

*The primary focus of redevelopment for this opportunity site should be to provide town centre activities, specifically retail (with associated ancillary elements where feasible), to improve the activity and visual appearance of the area, and contribute to Blessington town centre fulfilling its strategic role and function as an important service centre in the region.*

### Objectives BLESS OP8 East of Main Street (North)

- To provide for town centre infill development. Indicative block formats are provided in the below concept plan including potential for a Foodstore Supermarket floor plate.
- Redevelopment of this site should have a degree of regard to vernacular features that are present and consider an element of incorporation or interpretation in any proposed scheme.
- New buildings along the western boundary should also providing strong urban and active frontages to Blessington Main Street.
- Redevelopment of this site should consolidate the multiplicity of existing access points to Main Street and have regard to the Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme.





	<p>In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The OP site inadvertently ties a large landbank to a singular phase of regeneration.</li> <li>▪ The approach of the OP includes desire lines east (non-vehicular) and south, a multiplicity of roads/streets, preservation of existing vernacular buildings, public open space, and a function link to the landbank to the south. This approach could materially undermine its developability for a foodstore, and for substantive development of most forms.</li> <li>▪ It appears that the Draft LAP renders the available subject lands as somewhat sacrificial to the unavailable southern extents of the opportunity site, which is not appropriate or proportionate. The subject lands should be able to contribute positively to the provision of development and services needed in the town. The assembly of the current extents into a single opportunity site is typically not something that can be realistically mirrored in terms of actual site assembly.</li> <li>▪ The subject lands are the assembly of two parcels, the addition of 5 No. additional parcels is not considered to be reasonably likely.</li> <li>▪ Presenting OP8 as a heavily integrated development concept, that lacks any particular modular or phased approach, including significant ancillary/infrastructure elements, will likely stymie the realization of town centre regeneration.</li> <li>▪ The majority of OP sites in the Draft LAP are aspirational and complicated in nature. Lidl Ireland GmbH is not in a position to take on the role of large scale property developer as would be required to deliver the same. Lidl have been seeking to secure lands in Blessington for over 20 years to date, with the evolution of food shopping in Blessington being relatively stagnant. In this context the subject lands are the only suitable, available, viable location.</li> <li>▪ The Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 set out policy in relation to the location of retail development and the use of the sequential approach test, which is pertinent in relation to overlapping TC 'Town Centre' zones and Core Retail Areas.</li> </ul>
--	--

### Chief Executive Response

#### Request 1:

Noting the extent of the TC 'Town Centre' zoning on the opposite side of the N81 from the subject lands, the Chief Executive is not opposed to the rezoning request to extend the TC 'Town Centre' zoning to include the entire landholding. Furthermore, considering the relatively small residual RE 'Existing Residential' zoning to the north of the subject landholding, with MU 'Mixed Use' lands on two sides and with TC 'Town Centre' lands opposite, it would be appropriate to extend the TC 'Town Centre' zone further north.

On the basis of the above, it is recommended to zone the subject lands, and the immediately adjacent RE 'Existing Residential' lands to the north, as TC 'Town Centre'.

#### Request 2:

In relation to OP8, the Chief Executive rejects the assertion that the inclusion of the subject lands within opportunity site OP8 ties a large landbank to a singular phase of regeneration, and that the northern lands are 'sacrificial' to the southern lands. Individual development sites within an opportunity site may be developed, as long as the development objectives of the overall opportunity site are delivered where relevant, or are not rendered unachievable by later stages of regeneration as part of such development. In order to allay concerns however the CE recommends that the 'Concept Plan' for OP8 be omitted.

The Chief Executive is amenable to the inclusion of text to clarify the matter of incremental development in relation to opportunity sites.



In relation to the apparent conflict between the TC 'Town Centre' zoning and the description of OP8 including 'high intensity residential and mixed use development', attention is directed to CPO 5.3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, which states (in part) the following:

*'Other than in the retail core area, residential development shall be the primary development objective for lands zoned town centre or village centre. This shall not preclude commercial development on lands zoned town centre or village centre when suitable sites are not available in the core retail area.'* As such, the description of the primary focus of redevelopment for OP8 is consistent with the TC 'Town Centre' zoning.

In relation the issue of the opportunity site potentially undermining the developability of the subject lands for a foodstore, the Chief Executive notes that the subject lands remain outside the Blessington Core Retail Area as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, in which an application for a foodstore may be subject to a retail impact assessment. Furthermore, block formats as included in **concept plans are indicative only**, whereby the overall objectives of OP8 may still be achievable with alternative layouts that may facilitate such a development. In relation to the recommended concept plan as included in the submission, attention is drawn to CPOs 5.3, 5.4, 5.17 and 5.21 of the Wicklow County Development Plan, which state the following:

*5.3 To particularly promote and facilitate residential development in town and villages centres:*

- *Promote the 'active' use of above ground floor levels, and in particular to promote the concept of 'living over the shop' in centres. Where a 'living over the shop' use is proposed, a relaxation in density, car parking and open space standards will be considered, where the development meets very high quality of design and accommodation.*
- *[...]*

*5.4 To limit the concentration or clustering of uses that have bland inactive frontages and that fail to interact with the streetscape including car parks, blank shop frontages and ground floor offices. Such uses undermine the vitality of the town or village centre.*

*5.17 To harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking. New development should respect and complement the historic fabric of existing towns and villages – the traditional street patterns, plot sizes, mix of building types, distinctive paving and attractive street furniture.*

*5.21 To strengthen the urban structure of towns and villages by ensuring that any new development contributes to a coherent urban form, focused on a high quality built environment of distinct character. New development shall incorporate a legible and permeable urban form that protects and complements the character of the street or area in which it is set in terms of proportion, enclosure, building line, design and by the marrying of new modern architecture with historic structures.'*

The submitted concept plan, with a large area of surface car parking and a single-use large structure dominating the subject lands, may not accord with the above objectives.

On foot of the above, it is not recommended to split/amend OP8. It is recommended to amend the text in relation to opportunity sites as set out below.

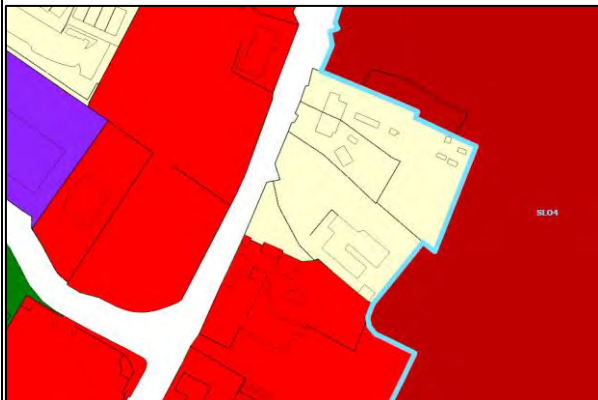
#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

1. Amend Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives (and any changes consequent) as follows:



**Draft LAP:**



**Recommended Amendment (including Amended SLO4 boundary):**



2. Amend Section B.1 of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 Written Statement as follows:

**Blessington 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.*

*'For a number of the OPs / SLOs concept sketches are shown in this plan. These are conceptual only, did not include complete site surveys/analysis, and should not be taken as a definitive guide as to the acceptability or otherwise of any access points, road layouts or building positions/designs. Any application for permission on said lands must conform to all standards and requirements of the Planning Authority, as set out in this plan and the Wicklow County Development Plan'.*

3. Amend OP8 as follows:

**Omit** OP8 'Concept Plan' Figure B1.11



## Part B.2 Housing Development

Numerous submissions raised the issue of 'residential development' in many forms. This section deals with the residential development issues raised in relation to the content of Section B.2 'Housing Development' of the draft LAP. Submissions that are seeking their land zoned to a form of residential development are dealt with under **Part B.8 'Zoning'** of this report while submissions which relate to the core strategy, population and housing targets and the level of residential zoned lands are addressed under **Part A 'Strategy'** of this report.

### B.2.1 Zoning for Residential Development

No.	Name	Issues Raised
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	Housing development should be done in tandem with supporting infrastructure e.g. shops, schools, GPs, roads.
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	No further housing estates should get planning permission before there is supporting infrastructure for additional residents.
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 133645</a>	Not in support of additional residential development until the waste water treatment plan situation is addressed. Zoning needs to be realistic in this regard.
21	<a href="#">Thomas Deegan, Honorary Secretary, Ballymore Eustace Trout and Salmon Anglers' Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 144509</a>	
86	<a href="#">Stephen Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 144918</a>	
75	<a href="#">Declan Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 213607</a>	Not in support of any further housing development by the Avon and the Greenway due to loss of natural habitat.
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	Derelict buildings – Derelict Sites Act has not been enforced previously and should be enforced by WCC.
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure sufficient land is zoned for housing, with emphasis on the development of houses close to town centre.</li> <li>▪ Prioritize the utilization of vacant buildings before introducing new housing projects.</li> <li>▪ Housing developments must be planned to meet demand while avoiding urban sprawl.</li> </ul>
149	<a href="#">N.Foley</a> <a href="#">Ref 210018</a>	More affordable housing is needed.
169	<a href="#">Pat O'Sullivan</a> <a href="#">Ref 221745</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supports recent housing developments.</li> <li>▪ More housing developments would be beneficial to all, especially young people.</li> </ul>
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zone sufficient land for housing near the town centre.</li> <li>▪ Prioritise vacant sites (especially along mainstreet).</li> <li>▪ Meet housing demand and avoid urban sprawl.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
Blessington has been identified as a Level 3 Settlement 'self-sustaining growth town' in the County settlement hierarchy and is considered to be a strong and active town that acts as the service centre for a wide rural catchment including the villages of Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lackan, Ballyknockan, Dunlavin, Donard and Vallemount (in County Wicklow), Rathmore, Eadestown, Ballymore (in County Kildare) and Brittas in County		



Dublin. The town is a hub for social, economic and administrative functions in addition to providing places for recreation, worship and leisure for its local community and wider rural catchment. In this regard it is prioritised to accommodate a significant level of population growth, 20%-25% range, between 2016 and 2031. It is therefore necessary to zone an appropriate amount of land for development to cater for this growth.

The draft LAP has included the relevant objectives and land use zonings to facilitate the delivery of the necessary infrastructure and amenities alongside new residential development. In order to ensure key infrastructure, like roads and schools, are delivered in tandem with residential development, the delivery of such infrastructure is tied into 'Specific Local Objectives' SLO areas that require the delivery of the key infrastructure alongside the delivery of housing.

The residential zoning provisions of the draft LAP have been carefully calibrated to ensure compliance with the NPF, RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan requirements and objectives, in particular consistency with the population and housing targets of the Core Strategy, as set out in the County Development Plan.

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. Increasing the amount of lands zoned New Residential – Priority 1 (RN1) as suggested 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).

With regard to the utilisation of vacant buildings, both the Town Centre First plan and this draft LAP detail support for the regeneration of such sites in Blessington and the Local Authority will continue to use any powers or supports available to it to tackle vacancy and dereliction, including (but not limited to) the application of the RZLT and Derelict Sites Act.

The utilisation and regeneration of derelict or vacant sites in the Town centre is further supported by CPO 5.13 of the County Development Plan which specifically refers to sites which are considered to be vacant or derelict and identifies the Town Centre of Blessington as an area in need of renewal and regeneration. This is supported by Blessington Town Centre First Plan included in the Draft LAP and identifies 8 opportunity sites in the town centre with a view to improving the public realm in the Town Centre and in time reducing the level of vacant buildings in the town. This is further supported by Objectives BLESS 1- BLESS5 in the draft LAP.

Chapter 5 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 refers to Town and Village Centres – Placemaking and Regeneration. Section 5.6, Town and Villages Centre Objectives (CPO 5.1-5.5) relate to targeting the reversal of declines in towns and villages, increasing the quality, vibrancy and vitality of our town and village centres and controlling uses that may have a detrimental impact on the vitality of the streetscape and the public realm.

Objective CPO 5.3 specifically refers to promoting and facilitating residential development in town and village centres including promoting the concept of living over the shop in centres by considering a relaxation in density, car parking and open space standards where the proposal meets a very high quality of design and accommodation for residents while CPO 5.6 relates to Regeneration and Renewal and includes specific objectives for the Regeneration and Renewal of Blessington Town Centre which is reflected in the draft LAP as outlined above.

Concerns regarding the impact of residential development on biodiversity are noted. The plan has been subject to numerous environmental assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, to ensure that significant adverse impacts can be identified and avoided in the crafting of the plan. Every effort is made through the application of sound planning and environmental protection principles to (i) minimise the amount of 'greenfield' land designated for new housing and (ii) to assess and put in place design and management measures when new development is allowed to occur to



ensure the impact is minimal and can be absorbed by the receiving environment.

With regard to the capacity of the waste water treatment plant Uisce Éireann have indicated in their submission to this Draft LAP that there is currently sufficient capacity available in the WWTP to service the level of growth envisaged in the County Development Plan Core Strategy for Blessington. WCC constantly liaises with Uisce Éireann with regard to the capacity, maintenance and running of the sewage network and sewerage treatment plants in the County and will continue to do so into the future.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



## Part B.3 Economic Development

A number of submissions refer to the development of tourism and the greenway with regard to supporting/enhancing the future economic development of the settlement. These submissions are addressed under **Part B.4 'Tourism'** of this report. A number of submissions are seeking rezoning of sites either to or from Employment. These submissions are addressed under **Part B.8 'Zoning'** of this report.

### B.3.1 Creation of Employment

No.	Name	Issues Raised
6	<a href="#">Dan Halpin</a> <a href="#">Ref 161448</a>	Need to stimulate innovation to create sustainable jobs
12	<a href="#">Annuschka Wiesemann, Danielle O'Farrell, Patrick Brien Directors of Deerpark Court, on behalf of 53 units in Deerpark Court housing estate</a> <a href="#">Ref 110731</a>	Rerouting the N81 would result in the economic suffering of businesses along the current N81 such as petrol stations and local cafes. These would suffer economically due to reduced traffic, impacting the local economy.
103	<a href="#">JP &amp; M Doyle Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 140434</a>	A comparison between the draft LAP and the 2013 LAP shows that it is now proposed to significantly reduce the extent of employment zoned land at Blessington from 94.4ha to 62ha. This results in a loss of 34% of the existing employment zoned land and will material affect the opportunities for new employment in Blessington. There is no planning justification for this.
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Attract businesses by improving transportation links and connectivity
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Enhance the liveability, infrastructure and community services in Blessington to support growth

#### Chief Executive Response

##### Quantum of Employment Zoned Lands

With respect to the zoning of land for 'employment' uses, the amount of zoned employment land has been reduced in the draft plan by changes in zoning at some locations to more appropriate uses, including identifying additional lands active open space and for the protection of watercourses and biodiversity. In this regard the CE is satisfied that the draft LAP provides for an appropriate amount of employment zoned land for the lifetime of the plan. It should also be noted that employment generating uses are not restricted to Employment Zoned lands. In this regard the Draft LAP identifies that Blessington Town Centre, has the highest density of jobs (per square metre of employment floorspace) and where the highest absolute numbers of jobs are located. Employment generating development may also be located on lands zoned for Mixed Use.

##### Creation of Jobs

A land-use plan has no direct role in creating jobs or bringing new employers to Blessington. However, it is considered that this plan's role is to ensure the availability of zoned land for employment purposes and to include objectives facilitating employment development in line with Blessington's status at Level 3 of the Wicklow Economic Development Hierarchy, and the 'Economic Development Strategy' as set out in Part A of the draft LAP.

##### Impact of N81/BIRR Bypass on Employment

The development of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme and/or the completion of the town inner relief road, would contribute significantly to the enhancement of the overall quality of the town centre by reducing through traffic levels through the town.



This approach is consistent with national policy as set out in 'Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns', which states the following: *'The dominance of vehicles within the public realm has contributed to the decline of many town centres, making them unattractive places in which to live or visit for extended periods.'*

With this re-routing of regional traffic out of the Main Street, a significant opportunity arises to regenerate the historic town centre of Blessington, which is also an Architectural Conservation Area, and to reclaim and reassert the Main Street as a place for the people rather than as a through route for vehicular traffic making it more attractive to locals, visitors and investors, to create new employment and wealth generating activities.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**  
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



## Part B.4 Tourism

### B.4.1 Blessington Greenway

No.	Name	Issues Raised
1	<a href="#">Claire Robinson</a> <a href="#">Ref 210146</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully in support of the Greenway</li> <li>Noted that the health of the lake water is paramount to the success of the Greenway</li> </ul>
58	<a href="#">Sara Clancy</a> <a href="#">Ref 181107</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In support of the Greenway around the lake</li> <li>It will allow more people to engage with nature and they will then be more likely to protect it</li> </ul>
75	<a href="#">Declan Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 213607</a>	In support of the Greenway
140	<a href="#">Luke Timmins</a> <a href="#">Ref 190159</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This submission suggests an extension of the Greenway to create a continuous loop around the Blessington Lakes, incorporating the areas of Lacken, Valleymount, Ballyknockan and other surrounding towns</li> <li>Noted that an extension would transform Blessington Greenway into a landmark destination for tourist and locals while fostering economic growth, sustainability and community wellbeing</li> </ul>
169	<a href="#">Pat O'Sullivan</a> <a href="#">Ref 221745</a>	The Greenway would be a hugely beneficial development for the town
247	<a href="#">Keith Burke</a> <a href="#">Ref 232311</a>	Supports the extension of the Greenway around the lake. It presents an opportunity to attract thousands of visitors to the area annually
250	<a href="#">Tony Shone</a> <a href="#">Ref 134938</a>	Urges an urgent resolution to the refusal of the Blessington Greenway

#### Chief Executive Response

The CE notes the support expressed for the Blessington greenway.

While the recently proposed greenway extension project has been refused consent by An Bord Pleanála, the 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.

In this regard it is recommended that all references in the draft plan for the Blessington Greenway should be amended to '.....future tourism projects in the Blessington Lakes area...'

It is also recommended that any text relating to the specifics of the refused greenway project should be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The provisions of the draft LAP, such as those relating to visitor centres, visitor car parking etc are proposed to be maintained in the plan, even in the absence of current greenway project, as such facilities would support a wide range of tourism project and activities.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

##### Amend the plan as follows:

##### 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 Pleanála refused permission in 2024 for an extension of the existing greenway to a route of 33km, will linking the settlements of Ballyknockan, Valkeymount, 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.

1. 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'.

#### **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.



#### B.4.2 Blessington Lakes

No.	Name	Issues Raised
1	<a href="#">Claire Robinson</a> <a href="#">Ref 210146</a>	The lake is a hugely important site of recreation for locals and an area of natural beauty
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disconnect with the lake needs to be addressed. Surrounding lands should be zoned tourism and allow access to the lake</li> <li>▪ Recommends 'tourism' zoning of lands to the west of Knockieran Bridge.</li> <li>▪ Suggested uses include Kayak/Paddle Board hire, small coffee shop, dredging and sectioning off an area of the lake for a natural swimming pool for swim related activities.</li> </ul>
179	<a href="#">Sumanth Varaganti</a> <a href="#">Ref 105431</a>	Proposes a club house facility with meeting rooms, showers and changing rooms and a community gym as an extension of the existing recreational facility on Blessington Lake
250	<a href="#">Tony Shone</a> <a href="#">Ref 134938</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consideration should be given to establishing a blue way route for visiting kayakers</li> <li>▪ Disagrees with precluding activity from the lakes. Safe spots should be designated for use by the public</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The CE notes the suggestions made with respect to the use of the lake and surrounds for recreational and tourism purposes. While the LAP provides objectives that would support such activity, the LAP is not the sports / tourism development plan for the area and it is considered that these suggestion would be more appropriately considered in the formulation of the new <b>Wicklow County Outdoor Recreation Plan</b> (public consultation commencing Feb 2025) and the <b>County Wicklow Local Sports Plan</b> that is being developed during the course of 2025.</p> <p>With respect to extension of existing or development of new tourism / recreation facilities on the lakeshore or at Knockieran Bridge, while the draft LAP does provide policy support for relational and tourism development, namely:</p> <p><i>'BLESS8 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',</i></p> <p>it does not make provision for zoning for such use in order to ensure utmost protection of the lake, which is a designated European Site (Special Protection Area).</p> <p>In this regard, the draft plan provides that lands between the Kilbride Road and lakeshore are zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' given their proximity to the lake and the likelihood that any development thereon, including tourism / recreation development, has the potential to give rise to adverse impacts on water quality or disturbance of the bird population using the lake. Tourism zoning is however provided for in the area around Burgage, subject however to limitations and controls to ensure no adverse impacts arise, including setbacks from the lakeshore.</p> <p>The LAP does not extend to the east side of Knockieran Bridge and any proposals for development in that area would fall to be evaluated under the provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan, which supports appropriate located an designed tourism/ recreation projects.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



### B.4.3 Tourist Accommodation & Visitor Facilities

No.	Name	Issues Raised
124	<a href="#">Blessington Tourist Office</a> <a href="#">Ref 142036</a>	Lack of accommodation options for tourists, costing local businesses potential revenue
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop accommodation options including hotels, B&amp;B's and Air B&amp;B's.</li> <li>Establish a tourist information centre and include Blessington in the Wicklow Tourism Action Plan</li> </ul>
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop accommodation options.</li> <li>Establish a Tourist Information Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>It is agreed that additional tourism accommodation would benefit the Blessington area. The LAP provisions, in conjunction with the provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan and the various tourism strategies of the tourism agencies such as Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow Tourism, all aim to support the development of appropriate tourism accommodation in the plan area. In particular the draft LAP sets out the following objectives:</p> <p><b>BLESS1</b> <i>To support opportunities to improve the tourism product in Blessington and to facilitate appropriate tourism development within the settlement.</i></p> <p><b>BLESS7</b> <i>To positively consider the development of:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>new hotels in Blessington;</i></li> <li><i>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;</i></li> <li><i>the development of hostels along established walking routes, the route of the proposed eGreenway within the settlement, and adjacent to existing tourism facilities;</i></li> <li><i>the improvement of, and extension to, existing tourist accommodation related developments, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.</i></li> </ol> <p>In addition, the County Development plan provides objectives which all support the development of tourism accommodation: County Policy Objectives 11.10, 11.11, 11.12, 11.13, 11.14, 11.15, 11.16, 11.17, 11.18, 11.19, 11.20.</p> <p>With respect to tourism office / information services, while Blessington has a tourist office, the provisions of the draft LAP in conjunction with the provisions of the Wicklow County Development Plan and the various tourism strategies of the tourism agencies such as Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow Tourism, would all support the enhancement of tourism infrastructure including visitor and information services.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



#### B.4.4 Tourist attractions / infrastructure

No.	Name	Issues Raised
124	<a href="#">Blessington Tourist Office</a> <a href="#">Ref 142036</a>	Lack and irregularity of public transport to nearest attractions leaves tourists stranded, a regular shuttle bus that runs between the town and Russborough House should be introduced during the summer months
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance tourism through historical walks, highlighting Blessington's rich history</li> <li>Developing Glen Ding Forest as a walking destination</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p><b>Transport:</b> While the suggestion of a shuttle bus is supported, the delivery of transport services is not within the remit of an LAP. For further responses to issues raised with regard to transports services generally, please see <b>Part B.7 Infrastructure</b> of this Report.</p> <p><b>Walks / Glen Ding Forest:</b> The provisions of the draft LAP support the further development of walks around the area and in particular links between the town and Glen Ding forest. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective <b>BLESS17</b> <i>'To facilitate and support the development of improved linkages between areas of tourist attractions within the settlement of Blessington, as follows:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lakeshore and tourist facilities at Burgage More/Burgage Castle.</li> <li>Blessington Town Centre/Architectural Conservation Area/Greenway Hub.</li> <li>Glen Ding Forest and Rath Turtle Moat.</li> <li>Possible woodland attractions, lake views, and tourist services at Doran's Pit.</li> </ul> </li> <li>the draft plan requires that development in SLO1, SLO2, SLO3 and SLO8 makes provision for links to Glen Ding.</li> </ul> <p>The Council will continue to support and deliver (where within its remit) improved walking routes and trails to local amenities and attractions.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031		



## Part B.5 Community Development

A number of submission were also received from landowners in the area requested that the level of AOS on their holding be reduced, changed or relocated. A number of submissions were also received from members of the public or community groups seeking the relocation of AOS zoning to other sites in the LAP boundary. These rezoning requests area addressed under **Part B.8 Zoning** of this report. A number of submissions also raised questions with regard to how the level of AOS and OS1 lands were calculated for the settlement. These submissions are addressed under **Appendix 3 –Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit**, of this report.

### B.5.1 Sports and Recreation –Athletics and Ball Sports

No.	Name	Issues Raised
3	<a href="#">John Burke</a> <a href="#">Ref 122534</a>	A large number of submission were received seeking the provision of an athletics facility to serve Blessington and West Wicklow noting the number of athletics clubs in the area, in particular Lakeside Community Games and the Lakeshore Striders. A number of submissions were also received with regard to the need for the provision of a permanent base for Blessington Rugby Club and Blessington AFC. A number of submissions were also received seeking to increase the level of lands around the existing GAA to allow for expansion.
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	
14	<a href="#">S. Connolly</a> <a href="#">Ref 113556</a>	
20	<a href="#">Frank Smyth</a>	The many achievements of local sports clubs and their athletes are outlined in a number of submissions and it is noted that is a strong link to athletics in the area.
22	<a href="#">Teresa Reardon</a> <a href="#">Ref 194909</a>	
23	<a href="#">Emma Edgeworth</a> <a href="#">Ref 203506</a>	
24	<a href="#">Lauren Richardson</a> <a href="#">Ref 204809</a>	Submitted that a scout den is also needed and that the old HSE building should be repurposed as a Scout Den.
25	<a href="#">Daniel Doran</a> <a href="#">Ref 205341</a>	The following is a summary of the main points raised in this significant number of submissions:
26	<a href="#">Mary Glennon</a> <a href="#">Ref 210622</a>	
27	<a href="#">Fiona Bassett</a> <a href="#">Ref 211805</a>	<b>Need for Additional Sports Facilities and AOS Zoned Lands</b> Submitted that there is insufficient active open space zoned. The area badly needs more sports facilities to serve Blessington and West Wicklow. A multi sports complex open to all sports and the general community is requested by a number of submission. Access to sports facilities should not be contingent if membership of a club, nor should an amateur sporting organisation be responsible for providing sports facilities to a town. Submitted that this is the responsibility of local and national government.
28	<a href="#">Sean Nolan</a> <a href="#">Ref 211715</a>	
29	<a href="#">Margaret Geoghegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 212529</a>	
30	<a href="#">Louise Clay</a> <a href="#">Ref 212333</a>	<b>Athletics – Multi Sports Facility</b> A large number of submissions refer to athletics in particular and state that the area badly needs an athletics grounds with a 400m running track and space for field events (long jump, shot put, javelin etc) to allow athletes to emulate the success of athletes in the recent Olympics. Noted that this is not possible if there is nowhere to train.
31	<a href="#">Vikki Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 205637</a>	
32	<a href="#">Elaine O'Donnell</a> <a href="#">Ref 214925</a>	
33	<a href="#">Rebecca Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 220402</a>	
34	<a href="#">Amaya Cowan</a> <a href="#">Ref 221417</a>	Requested that such a facility would be available to all the community- school, clubs, community games etc.
35	<a href="#">Lisa Bothwell</a> <a href="#">Ref 224721</a>	Requested that the facility include changing rooms, toilets, showers etc. Noted that local clubs including Lakeshore Striders and Lakeside Community Games



36	<a href="#"><u>Surita van Zyl</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 234323</u></a>	badly needs an all-weather running track and that there are also other athletics clubs in the area also but no suitable, safe or proper athletics track to train and/or compete on. These groups have a significant number of members across all ages but are reliant on borrowing grounds from schools etc on which to train.
37	<a href="#"><u>Kate Kidd</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 075309</u></a>	
38	<a href="#"><u>Jim Scott</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 084640</u></a>	Noted that West Wicklow is very under resourced in athletics facilities and having a designated area on which to build future facilities would be a huge help to local groups such as lakeside community games, lakeshore striders, community walking groups and would help revive a youth running club such as Blessington Valley. Such a facility would provide a safe place for people to train/exercise, especially children and female members of the community.
39	<a href="#"><u>Jim Walsh</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 084928</u></a>	
40	<a href="#"><u>Aine Moran</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 090328</u></a>	
41	<a href="#"><u>Colm Seville</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 090413</u></a>	
42	<a href="#"><u>Gavin Dooley</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 091440</u></a>	
43	<a href="#"><u>Tracie Hughes</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 091540</u></a>	Concerns also raised at the loss of sports grounds at Blessington Community College due to an expansion of the school building and what this will mean for local clubs who are currently reliant on these facilities.
44	<a href="#"><u>Jane Nolan</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 091833</u></a>	Also noted by a number of local schools that they would benefit from the construction of a multi sports facility as a facility to use but also in terms of the children's physical and mental wellbeing. It would support local schools in delivering comprehensive physical education and offer a dedicated space for community games and sports events.
45	<a href="#"><u>James Woods</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 095719</u></a>	
46	<a href="#"><u>Shane Mullaney</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 102455</u></a>	
47	<a href="#"><u>Lacken National School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 105141</u></a>	Submitted that this is a detriment to the ever growing population of Blessington, noting the level of new housing in the town and the level of new housing proposed. Also a detriment to current athletes who train here, many of which are very talented and not reaching their full potential or are leaving the local sports clubs for those with better facilities in Naas and Dublin which is a loss to the community.
49	<a href="#"><u>James Grace</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 133816</u></a>	
50	<a href="#"><u>St. Mary's Senior National School - (Gerry Brown-principal)</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 124421</u></a>	
51	<a href="#"><u>Tom Gormley</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 125926</u></a>	Submitted that children need more than just access to GAA pitches. Noted that Shoreline Leisure in Greystones recently got their track resurfaced. West Wicklow has never had an athletics track. Athletes have to travel over one hour to get to a useable track. This is a deterrent in developing our athletes of the future and providing a safe environment and location for individuals to train.
52	<a href="#"><u>Alana McMahon</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 131059</u></a>	This lack of this facility is also a deterrent for children and adults alike, from being active and healthy. Such a development would also have benefits for the locality in terms of mental and physical health, bringing communities together, integrating new residents to the area into the local community and keeping children and teenagers playing sports, especially girls where there is a high dropout rate from sports into the teenage years. May also help divert young people away from anti-social behaviour.
53	<a href="#"><u>Maria Murphy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 142036</u></a>	
54	<a href="#"><u>Steven Pettigrew</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 142922</u></a>	
55	<a href="#"><u>Anna-May Woods</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 172909</u></a>	
56	<a href="#"><u>Thomas Healy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 173834</u></a>	
57	<a href="#"><u>Patrick Hunt</u></a> <a href="#"><u>lakeshore Striders Running Club</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 181319</u></a>	Noted that parents currently have to drive at least 45mins to access proper training facilities for the children. If there was a facility in Blessington to serve the area, this would mean less of an environmental burden due to reduced car travel and less of a time burden on busy parents.
58	<a href="#"><u>Sara Clancy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 181107</u></a>	Submitted that this facility would also assist with tourism for Blessington noting have a superb location with stunning views of the mountains and lakes. This



59	<a href="#">Antoinette Connolly Burke</a> <a href="#">Ref 181553</a>	would bring money to the track facility itself, but also the cafes, restaurants, shops and to accommodation and transport services providers, in the locality giving an economic boost to the area. Submitted that this is a significant opportunity for Blessington.
60	<a href="#">Shania Cashin Lakeshore Striders</a> <a href="#">Ref 181923</a>	A healthier community means less strain on local healthcare, a stronger sense of belonging for everyone involved, and a positive impact on our local economy through events and activities.
61	<a href="#">Alvin Pieterse</a> <a href="#">Ref 182609</a>	
62	<a href="#">Gemma Rodgers</a> <a href="#">Ref 183111</a>	
63	<a href="#">Orlagh Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 183345</a>	
64	<a href="#">Anthony O Rourke</a> <a href="#">Ref 185802</a>	<b>Basketball</b> Serpents Basketball Academy Blessington which was established in 2024 needs a full size basketball court on which to train. The club is currently hiring the gym in the No.1 School Blessington however this is only half the size of a full basketball court. There is an outdoor court but it cannot be utilized in winter or bad weather. The club currently has 100 members with approx. 100 kids still on the waitlist. This is a very popular hobby with school children but they have nowhere to play formally should they wish to join a team.
65	<a href="#">Lisa Dempsey</a> <a href="#">Ref 190420</a>	<b>Soccer, Rugby, GAA and Tennis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blessington needs more pitch space for children's sports group in the town.</li> <li>▪ Rugby is played on the grass at Russborough as there are no proper pitches; there are no public football pitches or park for a kick about, and not tennis courts. Need a dedicated Rugby Facility. At present, the rugby teams in Russborough House lack essential facilities such as changing rooms, dedicated toilets, and adequate lighting for night training. These limitations significantly hinder the development and enjoyment of the sport for our young athletes</li> <li>▪ Blessington AFC, which was established in 1968, needs its own facilities. The club is limited with what facilities they can provide at their current location as the lands are leased. AFC would like some allocation of land in the town to allow them develop more playing pitches, possibly an astro and a club house.</li> <li>▪ Blessington GAA Club was founded in 1909 and originally located on lands adjoining Burgage cemetery. Due to increasing demand for additional playing pitches the club relocated in 2007 to its current location at Blessington Demesne which has served the club well for a number of years and has acted as a key focal point for the wider community. Need to expand the facilities at the GAA site facilities noting the increase in population in the area.</li> </ul>
66	<a href="#">Pamela Mc Loughlin</a> <a href="#">Ref 192709</a>	
67	<a href="#">Anne Doyle</a> <a href="#">Ref 193547</a>	
68	<a href="#">Olwyn Sheehan</a> <a href="#">Ref 193505</a>	
69	<a href="#">Robert Brett</a> <a href="#">Ref 195407</a>	
70	<a href="#">Gillian Moore</a> <a href="#">Ref 200954</a>	
71	<a href="#">Niamh Sheridan</a> <a href="#">Ref 202534</a>	
72	<a href="#">Janet Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 205732</a>	
73	<a href="#">Lisa Veighey</a> <a href="#">Ref 211448</a>	
74	<a href="#">Julie Winder</a> <a href="#">Ref 213853</a>	
75	<a href="#">Declan Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 213607</a>	
76	<a href="#">Jim Haide</a> <a href="#">Ref 222054</a>	
77	<a href="#">Daragh O Callaghan</a> <a href="#">Ref 220405</a>	
78	<a href="#">Seamus Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 221642</a>	
79	<a href="#">Nadine Walsh</a> <a href="#">Ref 223803</a>	<b>Zoning General</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zone additional lands AOS to give sports clubs more options to acquire lands.</li> <li>▪ Submitted that there is a significant decrease in the areas of lands zoned AOS.</li> <li>▪ In full agreement with the planners SLO2 &amp; SLO4 that sports facilities should be completed first before any residential development.</li> <li>▪ Regarding "Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives" - great to see open space under SLO8 and active open space under SLO02, close to town</li> </ul>
80	<a href="#">Stephen</a> <a href="#">Ref 225114</a>	
81	<a href="#">Niall Salmon</a> <a href="#">Ref 231754</a>	
82	<a href="#">Ciara Irvin</a> <a href="#">Ref 090154</a>	



83	<a href="#"><b>Scoil Mhuire NS, Ballymore Eustace</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 092410</a>	<p>center, instead of building new houses and apartment everywhere (especially if there is plenty of space not too far away). Everything else on the maps looks quite good as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requested that the green area at Blessington Demesne, across from Downshire Park and close to the new Town Park, be considered for AOS noting it is within walking distance for all who live in the town. Submitted that it should be considered to be a Sports Amenity Area, similar to other that exist - Ennis has a great example.</li> <li>The LAP is not being proactive in any way when it comes to a joined up approach for community, sport and recreation. The Blessington LAP should cater for a significant 20 to 30 acre development, future proofed for decades, to cater for Soccer, Rugby, Athletics, Running Track, Boxing, Playground, Water Sports such as Kayaking, Rowing, Swimming (Even if its years off.</li> <li>Reference made to the lack of AOS zoning in the portion of Blessington under the control of Kildare County Council.</li> <li>Relocate AOS to SLO8 where it is more accessible to all.</li> <li>Noted that the lands zoned AOS are owned by a residential developer and by a business using the land as a quarry. This does not give a lot of opportunity for any club in the town to purchase their own land. Therefore further lands should be zoned.</li> <li>Noted that none of the lands zoned AOS under the previous LAP were utilised. This is 11 to 12 years of zero growth for any of the clubs in the area.</li> <li>Submitted that the lands at Burgage Mór owned by ESB OR AT Haylands or Doran's Pit should be zoned AOS.</li> <li>Submitted that there is a lack of AOS lands zoning the LAP. The only section of lands to be zoned AOS are the lands owned by Cairn Homes in Blessington Demesne. Noted there are sections of AOS lands within the Mixed-Use zoned areas but submitted that there is still a need for further lands to be zoned AOS. Neither of these currently zoned AOS gives any opportunity to the local clubs of the town to purchase and developed their own amenities.</li> <li>From the previous 2013-2019 LAP none of the zoned AOS lands were utilised throughout the town. Further to this point this shows the need for the right lands need to be zoned AOS in order for them to be utilised, otherwise the zoning may as well not be changed.</li> <li>Submitted that lands at Burgage More should be zoned AOS however these have been zoned Natural Open Space.</li> <li>Requested that lands at Haylands and Santryhill be altered also for the new LAP with increased lands for sporting facilities and a park and ride located here. These lands are currently zoned mixed use with a portion for sports facilities.</li> <li>Submitted by a number of landowners that there is too much AOS zoned in the Draft LAP. Requested that the quantum of AOS zoning is reduced. Submitted by some land owners that there is insufficient justification provided in the Draft LAP for the level of land zoned AOS.</li> <li>Submitted that the LAP needs to differentiate between Open Space and Space for sport, recreation and amenity use. The current open space plans, whilst extensive on the face of will give no comfort to sports groups when they are told the open space is parklands and not for sports pitches.</li> </ul>
84	<a href="#"><b>Juliet Rouse</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 114252</a>	
86	<a href="#"><b>Stephen Deegan</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 144918</a>	
87	<a href="#"><b>Jason Moroney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 145052</a>	
88	<a href="#"><b>Sarah Byrne</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 165224</a>	
89	<a href="#"><b>Derek Reid</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 210538</a>	
90	<a href="#"><b>Caoimhe O'Brien</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 214816</a>	
91	<a href="#"><b>Keira Eva Mooney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 120714</a>	
92	<a href="#"><b>John Dooley</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 134344</a>	
93	<a href="#"><b>Raymond Cummins</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 151458</a>	
94	<a href="#"><b>Sue Finn</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 150824</a>	
95	<a href="#"><b>Liam Mooney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 181048</a>	
96	<a href="#"><b>Tony Griffin</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 112053</a>	
97	<a href="#"><b>Jerome Mooney Griffin</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 112351</a>	
98	<a href="#"><b>Joan Rose Mooney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 112513</a>	
99	<a href="#"><b>Jesse Mooney Griffin</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 112707</a>	
100	<a href="#"><b>Michael Mooney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 113101</a>	
101	<a href="#"><b>Joanne Mooney</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 113233</a>	
102	<a href="#"><b>Caroline Byrne</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 191825</a>	
105	<a href="#"><b>Teresa Parke</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 181104</a>	
106	<a href="#"><b>Kieran Veighey</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 212615</a>	
109	<a href="#"><b>Blessington No. 1 School</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 112509</a>	
110	<a href="#"><b>Carmel Cashin</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 163114</a>	
111	<a href="#"><b>Marian Tutty</b></a> <a href="#">Ref 180322</a>	



112	<a href="#">Laura Querl</a> <a href="#">Ref 190437</a>	
113	<a href="#">Glenn Querl</a> <a href="#">Ref 191429</a>	
116	<a href="#">Margaret Keogh</a> <a href="#">Ref 000203</a>	
120	<a href="#">Niamh Brophy</a> <a href="#">Ref 082217</a>	
122	<a href="#">Nicola Byrne</a> <a href="#">Ref 125823</a>	
123	<a href="#">Steven Byrne</a> <a href="#">Ref 125227</a>	
126	<a href="#">Niamh O Toole</a> <a href="#">Ref 150610</a>	
127	<a href="#">Blessington District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	
128	<a href="#">Deirdre Grogan</a> <a href="#">Ref 154955</a>	
129	<a href="#">Philip Byrne</a> <a href="#">Ref 140555</a>	
132	<a href="#">Noelle Moore</a> <a href="#">Ref 155635</a>	
133	<a href="#">Mark McCarville</a> <a href="#">Ref 171908</a>	
134	<a href="#">Eimear Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 164517</a>	
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	
139	<a href="#">Supporter of Blessington AFC</a> <a href="#">Ref 190049</a>	
140	<a href="#">Luke Timmins</a> <a href="#">Ref 190159</a>	
141	<a href="#">Eugene Tyrrell</a> <a href="#">Ref 192751</a>	
142	<a href="#">Charlie Johnston</a> <a href="#">Ref 193153</a>	
143	<a href="#">Lakeshore Striders</a> <a href="#">Ref 202709</a>	
147	<a href="#">Veerle Van der Velpen</a> <a href="#">Ref 203805</a>	
148	<a href="#">Maura Robinson</a> <a href="#">Ref 205201</a>	
149	<a href="#">N. Foley</a> <a href="#">Ref 210018</a>	
151	<a href="#">Anne Byrne</a> <a href="#">Ref 210732</a>	



152	<a href="#"><u>Lakeside Community Games</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 212312</u></a>	
153	<a href="#"><u>Dunmoy Properties Ltd</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 212157</u></a>	
154	<a href="#"><u>Jane Jameson</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 213348</u></a>	
156	<a href="#"><u>Catherine Broe</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 212907</u></a>	
157	<a href="#"><u>Terry Gale</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 214106</u></a>	
158	<a href="#"><u>Christina Browne</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 212917</u></a>	
159	<a href="#"><u>Colin Browne</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 215339</u></a>	
163	<a href="#"><u>Michelle Mooney</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 220308</u></a>	
164	<a href="#"><u>Kevin reid</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 220957</u></a>	
165	<a href="#"><u>Claire Reid</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 221016</u></a>	
166	<a href="#"><u>Paul Maloney</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 220548</u></a>	
168	<a href="#"><u>Elaine Mackenzie-Smith</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 223210</u></a>	
169	<a href="#"><u>Pat O'Sullivan</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 221745</u></a>	
170	<a href="#"><u>Adam Warren</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 223943</u></a>	
171	<a href="#"><u>Tina Stacey</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 231440</u></a>	
172	<a href="#"><u>N McHugh</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 222050</u></a>	
175	<a href="#"><u>Lakeside Community Games</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 103344</u></a>	
178	<a href="#"><u>St Brigid's National School, Manor Kilbride, Blessington</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 105615</u></a>	
180	<a href="#"><u>Claire Behan</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 111853</u></a>	
181	<a href="#"><u>Robert Cummins</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 114804</u></a>	
182	<a href="#"><u>Joanne Mooney</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 115608</u></a>	
183	<a href="#"><u>Orna Donoghue</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 113047</u></a>	



185	<a href="#"><u>Michael O'Mahony</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 112517</u></a>	
187	<a href="#"><u>Jonny Mullen</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 125519</u></a>	
190	<a href="#"><u>Laura Daly</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 132218</u></a>	
192	<a href="#"><u>Niall McKeon</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 134334</u></a>	
193	<a href="#"><u>Noel Gallagher</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 134622</u></a>	
196	<a href="#"><u>Catherine Kehoe</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 140503</u></a>	
197	<a href="#"><u>Aoifanna Phibbs</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 144100</u></a>	
200	<a href="#"><u>Lise-Marié du Preez</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 155318</u></a>	
201	<a href="#"><u>Edwina &amp; John Hardy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 160233</u></a>	
202	<a href="#"><u>Al Moore</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 170449</u></a>	
203	<a href="#"><u>Helen O'Shea</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 162139</u></a>	
204	<a href="#"><u>Derek keogh</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 163303</u></a>	
205	<a href="#"><u>Serpents Basketball</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Academy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Blessington</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 163620</u></a>	
206	<a href="#"><u>Supporter of</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Blessington AFC</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 163731</u></a>	
207	<a href="#"><u>Radek Dulny</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 173746</u></a>	
208	<a href="#"><u>Belgard Estates Ltd.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 153614</u></a>	
209	<a href="#"><u>Caitriona Mc Keon</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 171546</u></a>	
210	<a href="#"><u>Turlough Kinane</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 170650</u></a>	
211	<a href="#"><u>Naomi Dempsey</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 173201</u></a>	
212	<a href="#"><u>David Broderick</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 173025</u></a>	
214	<a href="#"><u>Blessington GAA</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 180116</u></a>	
217	<a href="#"><u>Lakeshore Striders</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Athletic Club (LSAC)</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 184811</u></a>	
219	<a href="#"><u>Cairn Homes</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Properties Ltd.</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ref 172755</u></a>	



220	<a href="#">Colm Dolan</a> <a href="#">Ref 191615</a>	
221	<a href="#">Will Blumlein</a> <a href="#">Ref 190908</a>	
223	<a href="#">Margo Griffin</a> <a href="#">Ref 202347</a>	
224	<a href="#">Paul cullen</a> <a href="#">Ref 203806</a>	
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	
227	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a> <a href="#">Ref 204711</a>	
231	<a href="#">Adam Cullen</a> <a href="#">Ref 205914</a>	
233	<a href="#">Niamh Craul</a> <a href="#">Ref 213207</a>	
234	<a href="#">Niamh Craul</a> <a href="#">Ref 214705</a>	
246	<a href="#">Aine Quinn</a> <a href="#">Ref 233007</a>	
239	<a href="#">Maggie Schofield</a> <a href="#">Ref 224919</a>	
241	<a href="#">Karen Brady</a> <a href="#">Ref 230207</a>	
243	<a href="#">Mary Paton</a> <a href="#">Ref 230751</a>	
245	<a href="#">Laura McGlade</a> <a href="#">Ref 231435</a>	
246	<a href="#">Eamonn Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 233007</a>	
247	<a href="#">Keith Burke</a> <a href="#">Ref 232311</a>	
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>While the issues and concerns raised in the above submissions are noted and the success and commitment of local sports clubs in the area is commended, it should be noted that the development of AOS (Active Open Space), the purchase of lands and provision / development of sports facilities by the Local Authority is outside the remit of the LAP.</p> <p>The draft LAP, in combination with the Social Infrastructure Audit appendix of the LAP has carried out a full audit of sports and recreation future land use needs within the settlement. The draft LAP has zoned the required amount of land for Active Open Space (AOS) and Community (CE), which allows for sports facilities to be developed, for the future needs of the population of the settlement and its catchment. For further detail on the calculation of the AOS requirements for the settlement, please refer to <b>Appendix 3 –Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit</b>, of this report.</p> <p>It is noted that under the 2013 Blessington Local Area Plan a total of c.25ha of AOS was zoned. The 2013 Blessington LAP had a 2022 target population of 7,500 for the settlement of Blessington (Co. Wicklow). The target population for the settlement of Blessington (Co. Wicklow) under the draft LAP to the year 2031 is lower at 6,313 with c.27ha specifically reserved for the development of AOS.</p> <p>A number of submissions have requested that lands at Burgage in the ownership of ESB are rezoned to AOS however these lands have been zoned OS2 on environmental grounds. In this regard please refer to <b>Part B.8</b></p>		



**Zoning and Section 5 SEA and AA of this report.**

A number of submissions have also requested that a multi-use sports facility be developed on SLO6. While such a facility would be open for consideration on lands zoned Mixed Use, there are concerns regarding the proximity of this site to the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA and the impact that noise and lighting, including floodlighting, could have on the qualifying interests of this SPA.

In this regard the draft LAP has been carefully crafted to zone for the required quantum of AOS lands to serve the existing and future population of Blessington and its catchment in accordance with National Guidance and the has located proposed AOS on sites where the development of such facilities would not have an adverse impact on any protected sites while still located closes to the town centre and existing and proposed residential areas and schools.

The LAP includes three categories of open space provision in the draft LAP and outlines under Section B.8 the types of recreation and amenity development associated with each category of open space zoning:

- AOS –Active Open Space. This zoning generally seeks the improvement of existing active open spaces, formal exercise areas, sports grounds and associated buildings, playing pitches, courts and other games areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality active recreational areas.
- OS1 – Open Space – generally refers to the further development of and improvement of existing landscaped parks including off-road walking / cycling paths, casual play areas, including playgrounds, skate parks, mixed use games areas, outdoor gyms, and allotments.
- OS2 –Natural Areas. This zoning refers to natural green spaces in the settlement boundary which need to be protected, enhanced and managed appropriately and generally comprise flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, steep banks, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity. The development of these lands for recreational uses may only be considered where such use is shown to not undermine the purpose of this zoning.

It is considered that these three categories make it clear as to what type of recreation facilities are expected on each zoning.

A number of submissions have made comparisons to sports facilities provided in Kildare in Particular Naas. In this regard is should be noted that Naas is a settlement with a much larger population of c. 26,000 at the time of the 2022 Census while Blessington has a population of c. 5,600.

A number of submissions refer to the lack of AOS zoning on the Kildare side of the town. In this regard it noted that this portion of Blessington is within the remit of Kildare County Council however the social infrastructure audit has accounted for the existing and future population within the portion of Blessington located in the constituency of Kildare County Council.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



## B.5.2 Provision of a Swimming Pool

No.	Name	Issues Raised
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	<p>A number of submissions were also received with regard to the need for a swimming pool in Blessington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted that a swimming pool is needed. A pop up pool was located here temporarily last year. Requested that a swimming pool and an athletics track be zoned together along with funding provided to secure this much needed infrastructure for local residents and visitors.</li> <li>Blessington needs a swimming pool. It is ironic that the children living around the largest inland body of water in the greater Dublin area cannot avail of swimming lessons in their locale.</li> <li>Request for a public swimming pool to serve Blessington and West Wicklow. There is no swimming pool to serve West Wicklow.</li> <li>The identification of a site for a swimming pool would be great for the town).</li> <li>Requested that the LAP priorities the provision of a swimming pool in Blessington.</li> <li>Requested that BLESS30 is amended as follows ( new text in red):</li> <li>To <b>prioritise</b>, facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington.</li> <li>The previous two submissions made by Wicklow County Council to the Large Scale Sports and Infrastructure Fund did not prioritise a swimming pool for West Wicklow accordingly. It is therefore imperative that the Blessington Local Area Plan includes a specific action to prioritise the provision of a swimming pool.</li> <li>The demand for local swimming facilities was demonstrated with the popularity of the Swim Ireland Pop-Up Pool when it was located in Blessington for 3 months in 2022.</li> <li>There is a clear need for a swimming pool in Blessington to serve the West Wicklow area.</li> </ul>
30	<a href="#">Louise Clay</a> <a href="#">Ref 212333</a>	
37	<a href="#">Kate Kidd</a> <a href="#">Ref 075309</a>	
39	<a href="#">Jim Walsh</a> <a href="#">Ref 084928</a>	
41	<a href="#">Colm Seville</a> <a href="#">Ref 090413</a>	
43	<a href="#">Tracie Hughes</a> <a href="#">Ref 091540</a>	
46	<a href="#">Shane Mullaney</a> <a href="#">Ref 102455</a>	
47	<a href="#">Veerle Van der Velpen</a> <a href="#">Ref 203805</a>	
49	<a href="#">James Grace</a> <a href="#">Ref 133816</a>	
58	<a href="#">Sara Clancy</a> <a href="#">Ref 181107</a>	
67	<a href="#">Anne Doyle</a> <a href="#">Ref 193547</a>	
75	<a href="#">Declan Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 213607</a>	
82	<a href="#">Ciara Irvin</a> <a href="#">Ref 090154</a>	
86	<a href="#">Stephen Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 144918</a>	
87	<a href="#">Jason Moroney</a> <a href="#">Ref 145052</a>	
106	<a href="#">Kieran Veighey</a> <a href="#">Ref 212615</a>	
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	
149	<a href="#">N. Foley</a> <a href="#">Ref 210018</a>	
154	<a href="#">Jane Jameson</a> <a href="#">Ref 213348</a>	
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	
207	<a href="#">Radek Dulny</a> <a href="#">Ref 173746</a>	
213	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 174017</a>	
228	<a href="#">Community Pool for West Wicklow</a> <a href="#">Ref 203426</a>	



229	<a href="#">Deirdre McCormack</a> <a href="#">Ref 210236</a>	
239	<a href="#">Maggie Schofield</a> <a href="#">Ref 224919</a>	
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>With regard to the development of a swimming pool, it should be noted that the purchase of lands and provision / development of sports facilities by the Local Authority is outside the remit of the LAP however such a development could be facilitated on a number of land use zonings in the draft plan area including AOS, TC and CE.</p> <p>The 2022-2028 County Development Plan recognised the need for such a facility in West Wicklow and includes objective CPO 7.43 which seeks <i>"To prioritise, facilitate and support the development of a community swimming pool facility and a sports complex within the western region of the County, so located to achieve maximum accessibility to the residents of West Wicklow"</i>.</p> <p>This is further support by Objective BLESS30 of the draft plan which seeks <i>"To facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington"</i>.</p> <p>It is noted that a number of submissions are seeking that the wording of BLESS30 is amended as follows: <i>"To prioritise, facilitate and support the development of a swimming pool/leisure centre within Blessington"</i>.</p> <p>In 2025, as part of the National Sports Policy, the Wicklow County Council will be developing a Local Sports Plan for the County, which will identify infrastructure needs as well as a project delivery programme for new facilities. In this regard it is considered that the Local Sports Plan will identify which facilities will be prioritised in each settlement. It is therefore considered that the wording of BLESS30 as included in the draft LAP is appropriate at this time. All of the submissions made with respect to sports infrastructure to this LAP will be considered in the preparation of the Local Sports Plan.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



### B.5.3 Sports and Recreation -Water Sports

No.	Name	Issues Raised
86	<a href="#">Stephen Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 144918</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for water sports such as rowing on the reservoir however water sports and recreation do not feature in the plan.</li> <li>▪ Seeking a permanent site for Poulaphouca Paddlers Kayak Club who are affiliated with Canoeing Ireland.</li> <li>▪ The club has a growing membership. Potential growth of the club is hindered by a lack of a permanent base/clubhouse. The club had 70 applications in December 2023 but only 22 spots available, leaving 40 on the 2025 waitlist.</li> <li>▪ This project will benefit not only the club, but the community at large and the surrounding region, by serving as a welcoming hub where participants of all ages will gather, connect and continue to develop a shared passion for the outdoors.</li> <li>▪ The Poulaphouca Paddlers are working out of three metal containers at Russelstown bay with approximately 103 members from east Kildare and west Wicklow.</li> <li>▪ The club organizes 2–5 weekly activities between April and September and runs summer camps for juniors. It also hosts the Liffey Lakes Race, part of the national canoe/kayak marathon series, and plans to expand into canoe polo and freestyle kayaking by 2025.</li> <li>▪ Please consider investing in an adequate boathouse and recreational facility for the club to continue its great work for the years to come.</li> <li>▪ Noted that the club is incredibly well run and organised with a very dedicated management.</li> <li>▪ Club needs a sheltered bay location, preferably in the Burgage area, to maximize usage with a slipway as this would be most accessible and include appropriate parking to facilitate transport of kayaks. Would also need changing rooms, boat store, workshop, tea room/kitchenette and gym area.</li> <li>▪ Having an established relationship with the ESB, Poulaphouca Paddlers respect the environment and follow a leave no trace approach.</li> <li>▪ Provide a safe man made swimming area in the lake.</li> <li>▪ The ESB's monopoly over the lake needs to be addressed once and for all - The lakes are an amazing resource which should be available to all to use, and the ESB's attitude of precluding activity is arrogant and short sighted - the lakes are for everyone and constantly using 'insurance' as a reason for depriving people of a public amenity is unacceptable. Yes there are dangerous parts to the Lakes, so let's designate safer areas so that for the people who do try and swim in the lake do so only in these safer spots.</li> <li>▪ Planners could seek to re-orientate / open up the town to the lakes more. The area opposite the back of the Downshire could be developed to encourage tourists to move easily between lakeside facilities and the town; e.g. boat hire facilities towards the bridge - even a few pontoons on the water for fishing boats / day sailor type boats could bring business to the town.</li> </ul>
104	<a href="#">Canoeing Ireland</a> <a href="#">Ref 181738</a>	
107	<a href="#">Ryan McGloin</a> <a href="#">122010</a>	
108	<a href="#">Elizabeth Doyle</a> <a href="#">Ref 111644</a>	
115	<a href="#">Neil Tilley</a> <a href="#">Ref 213724</a>	
133	<a href="#">Mark McCarville</a> <a href="#">Ref171908</a>	
144	<a href="#">Member of Poulaphouca Paddlers</a> <a href="#">Ref 200443</a>	
145	<a href="#">Teresa Parke</a> <a href="#">202810</a>	
146	<a href="#">Donal O'Brien</a> <a href="#">Ref 203934</a>	
150	<a href="#">Lisa Byrne</a> <a href="#">Ref 210403</a>	
155	<a href="#">Debbie McCarthy</a> <a href="#">Ref 212222</a>	
160	<a href="#">Peter Harney</a> <a href="#">Ref 215045</a>	
162	<a href="#">Poulaphouca Paddlers Committee</a> <a href="#">Ref 194723</a>	
179	<a href="#">Sumanth Varaganti</a> <a href="#">Ref 105431</a>	
186	<a href="#">Samuel Stack</a> <a href="#">Ref 123217</a>	
215	<a href="#">Orlagh Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 180650</a>	
216	<a href="#">Ciaran Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 183059</a>	
222	<a href="#">Ciara O'Dwyer</a> <a href="#">Ref 200912</a>	
223	<a href="#">Margo Griffin</a> <a href="#">Ref 202347</a>	
232	<a href="#">Kathleen Elliott</a> <a href="#">Ref 212828</a>	
238	<a href="#">Emer Maloney</a> <a href="#">Ref 225409</a>	
250	<a href="#">Tony Shone</a> <a href="#">Ref 134938</a>	



### Chief Executive Response

While the issues raised in these submissions are noted and the success and commitment of local sports club in the area should be commended, the purchase of lands and provision / development of sports facilities by the Local Authority is outside the remit of the LAP.

There are also environmental sensitivities to consider with regard to any development along the Lakeshore noting the protected status of the Poulaphouca Reservoir and the impact such development could have on the qualifying interests of this SPA. In this regard please refer to **Section 5 SEA and AA** of this report.

It is noted that the Poulaphouca Reservoir is a manmade structure originally formed for the generation of electricity and is therefore in the ownership of the ESB. The ownership/maintenance and access to the lake/reservoir is outside the remit of the LAP.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



#### B.5.4 Schools, Services and General Community Facilities

No.	Name	Issues Raised
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	It is hoped that housing development will be done together with supporting infrastructure such as new shops, school places, GPs and road markings. We are getting new houses without anything new around them to support extra population.
20	<a href="#">Frank Smyth</a>	More school/education and childcare infrastructure is required. General community infrastructure has not kept up with the level of housing development.
22	<a href="#">Teresa Reardon</a> <a href="#">Ref 194909</a>	A dog park is also badly needed. Somewhere for dogs to exercise safely without endangering themselves or others. It is a disgrace that a town of this size doesn't have one yet.
29	<a href="#">Margaret Geoghegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 212529</a>	Need more Schools.
37	<a href="#">Kate Kidd</a> <a href="#">Ref 075309</a>	As far as Secondary schools go, many people would not choose Blessington Community College for their children if they had the choice. Many travel outside the area to access high quality Secondary education or move out of the area completely. This is a major issue for the town and one which is a continuous topic of conversation for all primary school parents.
89	<a href="#">Derek Reid</a> <a href="#">Ref 210538</a>	The town badly requires more infrastructure and facilities within the community given the level of planning permission granted for new estates granted in the last couple of years.
110	<a href="#">Carmel Cashin</a> <a href="#">Ref 163114</a>	Blessington needs a community centre/community hub at an accessible location in the settlement. This space should be a central hub where individuals from a wide range of backgrounds come to socialise, learn, and enjoy and benefit from services and opportunities which meet the changing needs of Blessington and wider West Wicklow communities including supports and education, to help those experiencing social isolation and to encourage active participation within the community
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Blessington needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional crèches are needed to accommodate the growing population.</li> <li>▪ Need to prioritize the development of the new 1000 student secondary school without delay and also zone land for a second secondary school.</li> <li>▪ A new doctors' surgery or additional doctors should be provided to meet the demands of the growing community.</li> <li>▪ Additional land is needed for an extension to the cemetery. Develop car parking facilities at the Avon Ri, Burgage Cemetery to improve access.</li> <li>▪ Develop a larger skate park and upgrade playground facilities to accommodate the growing population.</li> <li>▪ Introduce dog litter bins in strategic locations around the town.</li> </ul>
154	<a href="#">Jane Jameson</a> <a href="#">Ref 213348</a>	Local secondary school is full and no sign of new school.
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Childcare: Additional crèches needed.</li> <li>▪ Schools: Develop a new secondary school and zone land for a second one.</li> <li>▪ Health Services: Provide a new doctors' surgery or additional doctors.</li> <li>▪ Zone land for a new cemetery. Create a carpark opposite the current graveyard in Burgage (on Avon land).</li> <li>▪ Skate Park and Playground: Develop a larger skate park and upgrade playground facilities.</li> <li>▪ Dog Litter Bins: Introduce bins in strategic locations.</li> </ul>



## Chief Executive Response

### Primary and Secondary School Provision

The draft LAP, in combination with the Social Infrastructure Audit appendix of the LAP has carried out a full audit of primary and secondary school capacity in the settlement of Blessington and its catchment. The Social Infrastructure Audit recommends zoning sufficient lands for an additional primary and a secondary school to provide for and futureproof the provision of primary and secondary education facilities serving Blessington and its catchment. It is further noted that planning permission has been granted for a primary level Gaelscoil on portion of Blessington located within the jurisdiction of Kildare County Council. This Gaelscoil is currently operating on a temporary site. The new school building will allow this school to increase its capacity by circa 30%.

While the LAP as a land use plan can facilitate the provision of new schools through appropriate land use zoning, it should be noted that the purchase of lands and provision / development of schools is outside the remit of the LAP and the Local Authority. The provision of primary and secondary school facilities in Ireland is determined on an area specific basis by the DoEd, having regard to available school capacity, demographic projections, an analysis of child benefit records, and local travel pattern modelling.

The DoEd is monitoring the demand for and provision of schools in the LAP area on an ongoing basis and WCC will continue to consult and liaise with the DoEd in this regard.

### Childcare/Crèches

The draft LAP, in combination with the Social Infrastructure Audit appendix of the LAP has carried out a full audit of childcare/crèche capacity in the settlement of Blessington. The Social Infrastructure Audit identified that Childcare facilities in Blessington are at or near capacity. It is noted that since finalising the Social Infrastructure Audit a new crèche facility has been completed by Cairn Homes on the Sorrell Wood residential development however this facility is not yet operational and is currently seeking an operator. It is further noted that this crèche will likely only serve the childcare needs of the population generated by this associated residential development.

The future provision of childcare facilities to serve future residential development in Blessington is underpinned by objective CPO 7.5 of the CDP, which requires that a Social Infrastructure Audit has to be carried out alongside any planning application for a new housing development of a significant number of units, to determine the need / capacity of a childcare facility.

In addition Objective CPO 7.29 of the CDP requires that *"where considered necessary by the Planning Authority, to require the provision of childcare facilities in all residential developments comprising 75 houses or more (including local authority and social housing schemes). In accordance with Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government guidelines, childcare places shall be provided at a ratio of 20 places per 75 residential units, having regard to cumulative effects of permitted development, (unless it can be demonstrated that having regard to the existing geographic distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area that this level of childcare facilities is not required). Without substantial cause, it is the policy of the Planning Authority not to allow a change of use of these premises within five years"*.

It is noted under Section B.8 Zoning of the Draft LAP that childcare/crèches can be developed on all Residential (RN/RE) zoned lands in the plan area, however childcare/crèche facilities are also open for consideration on other land use zonings including TC (Town Centre), (E) Employment, (CE) Community and Education.

It should be noted the Local Authority cannot control the type of childcare spaces (baby, toddler, pre- school) to be provided in each facility. This is determined in terms of viability of a business for the end user. With respect to who is generally responsible for delivering childcare facilities, this is very much so developer led.

Having regard to the projected growth in the settlement, the capacity and number of childcare facilities needs



to be increased to meet demand. The location of these facilities should follow in new residential areas or at appropriate locations near schools.

### **Healthcare**

There are no national standards for health provision in Ireland relating to the provision of primary care facilities, residential care facilities or the number GPs practising per head of population.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) estimates that a typical primary care centre can serve a population of between 10,000– 20,000. Blessington Primary Care Centre is located in the north of the settlement with both HSE and private services operating from this facility however the Social Infrastructure Audit indicates that there is a need for further GP services in Blessington.

In this regard the provision of health facilities and GP surgeries are a matter for the Health Service Executive (HSE), however the LAP endeavours to facilitate the provision of such facilities through flexible zoning provisions and development objectives / standards; in particular the development of new health care facilities that is supported in a wide range of land use zone categories and Objective BLESS29 which seeks *“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).*

### **Cemeteries**

The concerns raised in a number of submissions 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.

CPO 7.55 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 states that it is an objective of Wicklow County Council *‘To facilitate the development of new, improved or expanded places of worship and burial grounds including natural burial grounds at appropriate locations in the County, where the demand for the facility has been demonstrated.’*

This objective applies countywide including the Blessington plan area and surrounds. This objective does not require burial grounds to be developed within the built up area of a settlement and supports the development of such uses in the vicinity of Blessington including outside the LAP boundary. In this regard it is noted that many new cemeteries are now locating outside settlements, for example Kiltarnan Cemetery Park in South Dublin, which is an excellent example of a modern cemetery park noting its rural location and peaceful surrounds and where there is little development pressure from other active land uses.

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.

### **Playgrounds and Dog Park**

The Social Infrastructure Audit has identified that there is a shortfall of equipped playspaces in the settlement and it is recognised that there is currently no dog park. Casual play space and equipped play space are most usually permissible under an OS1 ‘Open Space’ land use zoning objective. The Social Infrastructure Audit identified that c.13.6ha of OS1 would be required to accommodate amenity areas and play spaces to serve the projected population of Blessington (Co. Wicklow and Co. Kildare) and its catchment during the lifetime of the plan. A total of c.23ha of land has been zoned OS1. OS1 lands have been zoned to complement the location of existing OS1 facilities and close to residential areas and the Town Centre



In this regard the recent opening of phase 1 of the new town park developed by Cairn Homes is a positive and much welcomed asset to the town by Wicklow County Council and includes an excellent new playground with greenspaces and walks.

**Dog Litter Bins**

It is not within the remit of the draft LAP to deliver such infrastructure; this is the responsibility of Baltinglass Municipal District (offices located in Blessington). This request will be brought to the attention of the Municipal District team.

On foot of this submission, no amendments to the LAP are deemed necessary.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



### B.5.5 Community Gardens/Allotments

No.	Name	Issues Raised
167	<a href="#">Blessington Allotments Campaign</a> <a href="#">Ref 221637</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Blessington Allotments Campaign welcomes the inclusion of allotments and community gardens in the draft Local Area Plan for Blessington.</li> <li>▪ While Open Space (OS1) is appropriate for the inclusion of allotments and community gardens, flexibility should be built in to the Local Area Plan so as to not constrain temporary use of this land. As an example, during the most recent recession in Ireland, community gardens were located temporarily on land zoned residential throughout Ireland.</li> <li>▪ The Blessington Allotments Campaign would also like to highlight that community gardens are now defined in law, as per the Planning and Development Act 2024</li> </ul>
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Requesting that allotments are developed.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>With regard to the development of allotments it should be noted that the purchase of lands and provision / development of such as facility by the Local Authority is outside the remit of the LAP.</p> <p>With regard to the development of allotments the benefits of such as use in villages, towns and cities are acknowledged in particular with regard to mental health, general wellbeing and community building. The Draft Blessington Local Area Plan indicates that allotments are considered to be an appropriate use on lands zoned Agriculture (AG) and OS1 with a specific objective supporting the development of allotments and/or a community gardens on the OS1 lands zoned under SLO1. The Draft Local Area Plan does not indicate that once such a use is permitted on lands zoned AG or OS1 that it would be temporary only.</p> <p>In addition the 2022-2028 Wicklow County Development Plan recognises the importance of allotments and community gardens as an important element of sustainable communities. This is further supported by the following objectives of the 2022-2028 Wicklow County Development Plan which states that is an objective:</p> <p><b>CPO 7.48</b></p> <p><i>"To support and facilitate the development of allotments and community gardens, of an appropriate scale, on lands which meet the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Land situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/villages;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Land that is easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Where an adequate water supply can be provided;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Where adequate road infrastructure and access exists/can be provided; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Where adequate parking facilities can be provided".</i></li> </ul> <p><b>CPO 9.38</b></p> <p><i>"To encourage and facilitate agricultural diversification into suitable agri-businesses. Subject to all other objectives being complied with, the Council will support the alternative use of agricultural land for the following alternative farm enterprises:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Specialist farming practices, e.g. organic farming, horticulture, specialised animal breeding, deer and goat farming, poultry, flower growing, forestry, equine facilities, allotments, bioenergy production of crops and forestry, organic and speciality foods; and</i></li> <li>▪ <i>suitable rural enterprises</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## Part B.6 Heritage/Biodiversity

### B.6.1 Ecosystems

No.	Name	Issues Raised
1	<a href="#">Claire Robinson</a> <a href="#">Ref 210146</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns expressed about dangerously high levels of blue green algae in the lake water</li> <li>Suggests objectives included for protection of the lake in the plan</li> </ul>
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 133645</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The block on development within 100m from a stream rule is something that Dublin City Council (now Úisce Éireann) stipulates in planning for the protection of the reservoir within the catchment, and this rule should be followed through into LAP</li> <li>There must be a horizontal buffer distance to the lake to give space for nature, erosion and open space</li> <li>Have not considered the buffer to the SAC and SPA</li> <li>The Natural Environmental Consultants report should be updated in full or a new report completed</li> <li>Glen Ding should be protected and a significant portion of the boundary closest to the reservoir should be reserved for a Native Woodland within the development buffer</li> <li>In order to protect riparian lands and reservoir, the 25m buffer is too small and should be at least 50m with additional space for wider parkland areas.</li> <li>Undeveloped lands that have the potential to impact on the integrity of a European Site must not be zoned in any case, with the exception of open space. That goes for SLO5, SLO6 and SLO7 – submitter disagrees with the zoning of the lands in these SLO's.</li> </ul>
188	<a href="#">Kieran Doyle</a> <a href="#">Ref 123556</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerned about the ecosystems around Blessington Lake/Poulaphouca Reservoir/Golden Falls</li> <li>Reservoir needs to be protected from further algae bloom damage from pollution</li> <li>Lakes catchment of rivers leading into it should be monitored as the lake is supposed to be protected</li> <li>Blessington Waste Water capacity is full and has no capacity for new zoned lands</li> <li>The discharge into Golden Falls needs to be assessed</li> <li>The risk to users has not been taken into account and should be investigated further as it will have an impact on River Liffey Towns further down the river not just Ballymore Eustace where bathers are swimming in very poor water quality</li> </ul>

#### Chief Executive Response

In relation to the requests for an increased buffer around watercourses/waterbodies, the CE is satisfied that the 25m buffer generally applied throughout the plan area is consistent with guidance from Inland Fisheries Ireland, and with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan. Lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' considerably exceed 25m from watercourses in many cases, including around the Lakeshore, and Glen Ding has been protected with that zoning, as referenced.

In relation to buffers around European sites, the Draft Plan has undergone Appropriate Assessment, as addressed in **Section 5 SEA and AA** of this report.

In relation to the report by Natura Environmental Consultants, the draft plan states the following: *'In 2006, a report by Natura Environmental Consultants was prepared in advance of the preparation of a local area plan at that time. This provided baseline information that remains worthy of consideration to this day. This report is available on*



wicklow.ie' The report is not intended to represent a current day biodiversity study of Blessington. Rather, it is considered a point-in-time snapshot that feeds into the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit and the recommendations of the WCC Biodiversity Officer.

Issues in relation to the referenced SLOs are addressed in **Section B.8.2 Specific Local Objectives** of this report.

With respect to algae blooms and the monitoring of water quality within the lake catchment, Wicklow County Council, along with a number of state agencies, including but not limited to the EPA, NPWS and Uisce Éireann is committed to working to ensure water quality is improved and no development that might arise on foot of this land use plan would contribute to water quality deterioration.

Attention to drawn to the range of objectives with respect to water quality and environmental protections already set out in the Wicklow CDP which will apply directly in the plan area such as;

*'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.'*

However on foot of these submissions and those of other state agencies, the CE recommends some additional text and objectives be included in the Blessington LAP as set out to follow.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

Add the following text and objectives to Section B.7:

The 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.*



## B.6.2 Architectural Heritage

No.	Name	Issues Raised
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	Blessington is an Architectural Community. It should be an objective of the LAP for the removal of derelict/unused signage and the introduction of sympathetic and suitable placed signage throughout the town, including storyboards/art installations/murals.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>It is considered that an objective requiring the removal of derelict/unused signage and the introduction of sympathetic and suitable placed signage throughout the town, including storyboards/art installations/murals is outside the remit of the draft plan which is a land use plan – this would be more a matter for the projects and programmes of the Town Team and the implementation of the Town Centre First plan.</p> <p>The following objectives are included in the County Development Plan to promote the regeneration of Town and Village Centres and ensure that any proposed development in an ACA is carried out in an appropriate and sympathetic manner. In this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chapter 5 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 refers to Town and Village Centres – Placemaking and Regeneration. Section 5.6, Town and Villages Centre Objectives (CPO 5.1-5.5) and relates to targeting the reversal of decline in towns and villages, increasing the quality, vibrancy and vitality of our town and village centres and controlling uses that may have a detrimental impact on the vitality of the streetscape and the public realm.</li> <li>▪ Objective CPO 5.6 of the County Development Plan relates to Regeneration and Renewal and includes specific objectives for the Regeneration and Renewal of Blessington Town Centre which is reflected in the draft LAP under OP3 Market Square which seeks to regenerate 3 Opportunity sites in the town centre. The development objectives for OP3-Market Square as outlined in the draft LAP seeks that any development proposals in this area should provide an appropriate architectural response to the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area.</li> </ul> <p>Any development in the ACA will also be assessed under Chapter 8 of the County Development Plan which refers to Built Heritage. Objectives CPO 8.10-8.12 refer to the protection and conservation of built heritage in Co. Wicklow while Objectives CPO 8.21-8.24 refer directly to any development proposed in an ACA. In particular Objective CPO 8.22 seeks that a high standard of shopfront design relating sympathetically to the character of the building and the surrounding area will be required as part of any proposed development in an ACA that includes revisions, upgrades or the installation of a shopfront and/or shop signage.</p> <p>Section 6.4 of Appendix 1 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 also sets out shopfront design standards that will be implemented at development management stage. Furthermore, the Blessington Town Centre First Plan includes shop front improvements within a range of placemaking projects, which would be a matter for the WCC Town Regeneration Officer.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## Part B.7 Infrastructure

### B.7.1 Road network

#### B.7.1.1 Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR)

No.	Name	Issues Raised
12	<a href="#">Annuschka Wieseemann, Danielle O'Farrell, Patrick Brien Directors of Deerpark Court, on behalf of 53 units in Deerpark Court housing estate</a> <a href="#">Ref 110731</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns expressed regarding proposed re-routing of the N81 to the Blessington Inner Relief Road as outlined in the LAP.</li> <li>Rerouting would funnel traffic increased traffic volumes onto roads adjacent to Deerpark Court creating severe access challenges and pose serious safety risk for pedestrians</li> <li>Rerouting would result in a substantial increase in both noise and air pollution and endanger the protected green wildlife area adjacent to Deerpark Court Estate.</li> <li>Proximity of the road raises privacy concerns for residents.</li> <li>Re-routing is likely to result in the devaluation of properties in Deerpark Court and neighbouring estates, affecting residents' investments and financial security.</li> <li>Suggest alternative route behind Sorrel Wood and past the GAA grounds.</li> </ul>
20	<a href="#">Frank Smyth</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permission has been granted for several new housing developments abutting the BIRR. BIRR has become progressively busier with the natural expansion of existing families and the development of Sorrel Woods</li> <li>The majority of housing developments rest on the Blessington town side of the BIRR.</li> <li>Newly proposed housing developments along the BIRR will exacerbate traffic, potentially causing gridlock in estates which will in the long run have a negative impact on the monetary value of existing properties</li> <li>Were the BIRR to be formally linked up to the N81, thereby turning it into a national secondary road, it would be a recipe for disaster</li> <li>Permission being granted for hundreds of family units with play parks, walkways, schools, GAA etc on both sides of the BIRR, yet it is considered fit to turn this into a national secondary road that children are then expected to safely negotiate their way across</li> <li>New entrance from Sorrell Wood onto the BIRR questionable in relation to supporting N81, this section of roadway has been governed by white lines since day 1</li> <li>The route proposed previously through Doran's Pit or the GAA grounds would have been the least troublesome option</li> </ul>
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of the Inner Relief Road is needed.</li> <li>Requested that along the main street, parking is changed to parallel parking bays and that transient traffic is rerouted along the inner relief road.</li> </ul>
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The opening of the northern section would reduce heavy traffic on Oak Drive which was designed as an access road- not a thoroughfare.</li> <li>The southern section poses more of a problem, as the steep incline by Blessington Abbey/Orchard is not suitable for HGV's, most quarry related traffic carrying 44 tonnes. Such vehicles cannot build up enough speed to safely enter traffic flows at the adjacent roundabout from effectively a hill start.</li> <li>Suggests re-routing of the BIRR around Blessington Manor to join the N81 near the waste water treatment plant</li> <li>Merit in actively building the park and ride, particularly to coincide with the</li> </ul>



		opening of the BIRR
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete the inner relief road</li> <li>▪ Reroute traffic around town rather than through it</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The Local Authority is committed to delivering the BIRR project and continuing to work with the various transport agencies to progress this project in the short - medium term including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete the Blessington Inner Relief Road</li> <li>- It is intended that upon completion of the BIRR, the speed limit from the new roundabout at the northern end of the BIRR on the N81 and the existing southern roundabout at Blessington Industrial Estate, will be reduced as traffic not bound for Blessington is diverted onto the BIRR. This will allow for significant town centre / public realm / public transport improvements to be carried out in Blessington</li> <li>- While there may be some increased traffic along the BIRR, this route offers a more efficient alternative to traveling through the town centre. Furthermore, it will be designed with modern infrastructure that addresses potential traffic concerns, and will be subject to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets in terms of speed/pedestrian crossing points/safety/etc.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to the design / gradients of this route, such matters have been considered in both the consent granted for the sections already constructed and in the design to the final sections to be completed.</p> <p>With regard to the potential impact on residents along this route, these developments were only possible to develop with the opening up of lands by the construction of the first phases of this road, which was always intended to be a complete route around the town centre, and the road was designed to have adequate capacity and to be of a design that accommodated both these new housing areas and 'through' traffic.</p> <p>With regard to concerns raised regarding the impact of the BIRR on biodiversity in Blessington, in particular nearby/adjoining green spaces, the draft plan has been subject to numerous environmental assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, to ensure that significant adverse impacts can be identified and avoided in the crafting of the plan. Every effort is made through the application of sound planning and environmental protection principles to ensure the impact is minimal and can be absorbed by the receiving environment.</p> <p>Following the adoption of this LAP, the Local Authority is committing to preparing a Local Transport Plan, which will further detail an overall strategy and programme for addressing any existing transportation issues and supporting further development with appropriate infrastructure.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



### B.7.1.2 Condition of the N81

No.	Name	Issues Raised
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	<p>These submissions raise some or all of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Condition of the N81 Blessington to Dublin is inadequate for a national road, quality needs to be improved</li><li>▪ Trucks are destroying the road</li><li>▪ Poor road markings/no cats eyes making it dangerous to drive at night</li><li>▪ An upgrade of the N81 is needed to improve connectivity</li></ul>
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	
213	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 174017</a>	
Chief Executive Response		
<p>The maintenance of national roads is not a matter for a Local Development Plan, however these concerns have been noted and will be brought to the attention of the state agency responsible - Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).</p> <p>Objective BLESS44 supports the delivery of the N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme.</p>		
Chief Executive's Recommendation		
<p>No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.</p>		

### B.7.1.3 Local Roads

No.	Name	Issues Raised
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor road markings around the town centre, especially near Dunne Stores – very dangerous and confusing</li> <li>Roads management presumably outsourced by WCC</li> </ul>
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Regular pothole maintenance and improvements to smaller roads needed
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The completion of the local unnamed distributor road from Oak Drive to the Naas Road will in effect become a town bypass for traffic to and from Kildare. Will there be traffic-controlled signals or a roundabout at the Naas Road junction</li> <li>Such large-scale reduction in through traffic will facilitate more adventurous use of the road space for pedestrians and cyclists and a re-think on parking spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The Local Authority is committed to addressing local transportation issues and following the adoption of this LAP, the Local Authority is committing to preparing a Local Transport Plan, which will evaluate and address all the issues detailed above.</p> <p>Issues in relation to the exact configuration of traffic signals, junction design, crossing points, etc., are design considerations which are a matter for project-stage consent procedures. Submissions in this regard are best made to these individual projects when brought forward for consent. Note that roads within the 60kmh zone will be subject to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.</p> <p>Road maintenance is not a matter for a land use framework such as a local area plan. However, these concerns have been noted and will be brought to the attention of the department responsible.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## B.7.2 Bus/Train Services

### B.7.2.1 Direct service to Dublin City

No.	Name	Issues Raised
7	<a href="#">Gemma Corridan</a> <a href="#">Ref 154430</a>	<p>These submissions raise some or all of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An express bus to Dublin is required</li> <li>▪ 65 bus service is infrequent/overcrowded/insufficient</li> <li>▪ The town is lacking in public transport, irregularity of buses and lack of routes</li> </ul>
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	
30	<a href="#">Louise Clay</a> <a href="#">Ref 212333</a>	
49	<a href="#">James Grace</a> <a href="#">Ref 133816</a>	
124	<a href="#">Blessington Tourist Office</a> <a href="#">Ref 142036</a>	
134	<a href="#">Eimear Deegan</a> <a href="#">Ref 164517</a>	
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	
200	<a href="#">Lise-Marié du Preez</a> <a href="#">Ref 155318</a>	
207	<a href="#">Radek Dulny</a> <a href="#">Ref 173746</a>	
235	<a href="#">Patrick Quinn</a> <a href="#">Ref 204850</a>	
87	<a href="#">Jason Moroney</a> <a href="#">Ref 145052</a>	<p>These submissions raise similar issues as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local shuttle buses should be provided throughout the day/evening between smaller villages surrounding the town</li> <li>▪ A regular shuttle bus that runs between town and Russborough House during the summer months would be a great asset</li> <li>▪ School shuttle buses to Newbridge College and other nearby secondary schools are suggested</li> <li>▪ Direct bus service to Maynooth University or local link going directly from Blessington to Naas is suggested</li> </ul>
124	<a href="#">Blessington Tourist Office</a> <a href="#">Ref 142036</a>	
200	<a href="#">Lise-Marié du Preez</a> <a href="#">Ref 155318</a>	
213	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 174017</a>	
221	<a href="#">Will Blumlein</a> <a href="#">Ref 190908</a>	Requests WCC to allocate sufficient space and infrastructure to support the efficient running of public transportation, specifically increased volume of buses which the bus connect strategy envisions
7	<a href="#">Gemma Corridan</a> <a href="#">Ref 154430</a>	These submissions all suggest Luas line needs to be extended to Blessington.
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	
200	<a href="#">Lise-Marié du Preez</a> <a href="#">Ref 155318</a>	



**Chief Executive Response**

The Local Authority is committed to continuing to deliver all services / infrastructure within its remit to support the provision of improved public transport services in Blessington and to work with the various transport agencies to progress improvement projects.

While the provision of public transport services is beyond the remit of a land use framework such as a local area plan, objective BLESS49 supports the improvement of public transport services and infrastructure, including the delivery of the BusConnects Programme and Connecting Ireland programme as relevant to Blessington.

The Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2024 does not include the extension of the LUAS to Blessington. As such, it would be inconsistent for the Blessington Local Area Plan to include such an objective.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



### B.7.3 Parking

#### B.7.3.1 Town Centre public realm improvements & car parking

No.	Name	Issues Raised
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	<p>These submissions raise similar issues with respect to parking in the town centre as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further parking required within the town for cars and bikes e.g. bicycle parking near Market Square or beside the Moody Rooster.</li> <li>▪ Concerns about the removal of parking from the town square and the eastern side of main street</li> <li>▪ Detrimental impact on business operation and the town commercial vitality</li> <li>▪ Parking is already at capacity, removal of spaces will exacerbate this problem</li> <li>▪ Further limiting parking options could hinder efforts to attract new tenants or revive important vacant properties in the town centre</li> <li>▪ Limited parking will disproportionately impact individuals with reduced mobility/the elderly/families with young children in accessing services.</li> <li>▪ Needs to be a parking masterplan in place before losing more spaces</li> </ul>
138	<a href="#">Peter Eustace</a> <a href="#">Ref 183830</a>	
161	<a href="#">Catherine Roche</a> <a href="#">Ref 214258</a>	
177	<a href="#">J. P. &amp; M Doyle Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 105309</a>	
226	<a href="#">Peter Doyle, Doyle Fox &amp; Associates Solicitors.</a> <a href="#">Ref 202622</a>	
235	<a href="#">Patrick Quinn</a> <a href="#">Ref 204850</a>	
218	<a href="#">Sraith Fhada Housing Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 190036</a>	<p>This submission concerns lands on Main Street comprising the former Downshire Hotel. It is requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the LAP does not include any policies and/or objectives that would interfere with the accessibility of the property from Main Street, including preservation of vital existing on-street parking and also access/egress to and from the property for delivery and other vehicles – Objective BLESS3 and Section B.1 in particular should be amended accordingly;</li> <li>▪ any public realm / active travel or related projects includes on-street and drop off type parking at the frontage to the property; and</li> <li>▪ the LAP clarify that the 'Improving the Visitor Accommodation Offer' chapter of the Blessington Town Centre First Plan is not an objective of the Planning Authority, being incompatible with the owners intentions for the lands and the live planning permission in situ on the lands.</li> <li>▪ BLESS3 be amended as follows:  <i>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:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Reductions in through traffic along Blessington Main Street</i></li> <li>▪ <del><i>The rationalisation and reconfiguration of car parking within Blessington Town Centre.</i></del></li> <li>▪ <i>The reconfiguration of traffic movements around Newtown Square.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Improvements to the spatial and visual connectivity between Blessington Main Street, Market Square and Newtown Square</i></li> <li>▪ <del><i>The implementation of a comprehensive public realm scheme on Market Square and adjacent areas of Blessington Town Centre.</i></del></li> <li>▪ <i>The undergrounding of cabling along Blessington Main Street.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>



		<p>In support of these request, it is put forward that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ loss of car parking spaces in this area would have a disproportionate impact on the subject lands; the subject lands should be a priority in terms of encouraging regeneration of buildings and land use;</li> <li>▪ ease of access to the subject lands is of crucial important given the hospitality use planned, as is access for service and deliveries</li> <li>▪ safety issues regarding perpendicular parking on Main Street should not be used as rationale for changes to parking arrangements on the subject lands</li> <li>▪ while the plan has numerous objectives promoting intensification of the town centre, changes in car parking capacity on the Main Street could stymie investment</li> <li>▪ parking demand management measures should be a priority with permanent changes as last resort</li> <li>▪ In light of the planned greenway and its associated car parking demand, no diminution of car parking in Blessington should be considered in the absence of need, evidence and stakeholder support.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The LAP clearly details that the regeneration of the town centre, including public realm improvements in and around Market Square, is a key objective and is essential in order to maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre as the heart of the settlement. With the future diversion of traffic flows onto the completed BIRR, an opportunity exists to carry out significant enhancement to Blessington Main Street and Market Square, with the objective to make the area more user friendly with safe pedestrian and cycling facilities, more pleasant spaces to dwell and recreate and more opportunities to do business.</p>		
<p>The LAP does not provide the detail with respect to the design of any future public realm improvements, including any changes to car parking that might be proposed as part of any such future project. The plan only sets out the aims, objectives and standards that any future public realm projects will be required to meet, and any future programme of public realm improvement will be subject to the necessary consent process including where necessary public consultation. This would be the appropriate time for the submitters to give input with respect to changes that are of concern / interest to them or that might be proposed close to their properties. In this regard, it is clear that BLESS3 does not proscribe the design of any future improvements at or around any particular property.</p>		
<p>It should be noted that objective BLESS48 of the Draft LAP supports the development of multiple additional car parking locations that could compensate for any rationalisation of car parking on Blessington Main Street/Town Centre.</p>		
<p>With respect to clarify or confirming elements the Town Centre First plan, that is not a function of an LAP.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
<p>No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.</p>		



### B.7.3.2 Car parking - General

No.	Name	Issues Raised
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Suggest the development of additional parking in new estates at key locations.to prevent congestion and illegal parking on main roads.
138	<a href="#">Peter Eustace</a> <a href="#">Ref 183830</a>	These submissions raise similar issues with respect to parking in the town centre as follows:
161	<a href="#">Catherine Roche</a> <a href="#">Ref 214258</a>	Suggestion introduction of paid parking (with a limited time free of charge).
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Suggest new car parks needed at locations such as Burgage Cemetery and Avon Rí.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The quantum of car parking within new residential estates must have regard to the development and design standards as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, with consistent standards throughout Co. Wicklow. Details such as level of car parking are to be assessed at planning application stage.</p> <p>The control of parking is not within the remit of a land use framework such as a local area plan. Note that the accompanying Blessington Town Centre First Plan makes reference to the potential implementation of paid parking within the town; 'Section 1 - Strategic Transport Improvement' sets out the recommended objectives including the introduction of paid parking in the long term (3+ years). Such a project would be a matter for the Town Regeneration Office/Municipal District.</p> <p>Section B.1 of the Draft Blessington LAP Written Statement states the following: '<i>The Blessington Local Area Plan is a land use framework and is not an 'action plan'. As such, the full range of projects included in the TCF plan is not required to be integrated into the Local Area Plan.</i>' On this basis, no change is required.</p> <p>In relation to the need for additional car parking, objective BLESS48 of the Draft LAP supports the development of multiple additional car parking locations to the south, west, and north of the built-up area.</p> <p>Following the adoption of this LAP, the Local Authority is committing to preparing a Local Transport Plan, which will further detail an overall strategy and programme for addressing any existing transportation issues and supporting further development with appropriate infrastructure.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



#### B.7.4 Footpaths and Cycleways

No.	Name	Issues Raised
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	N81 needs significant investment to safe for cyclists
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved cycle paths are needed around the town connecting Blessington to surrounding areas</li> <li>More pedestrian crossings are needed to improve safety, especially on the N81 near the Texaco garage</li> </ul>
169	<a href="#">Pat O'Sullivan</a> <a href="#">Ref 221745</a>	Any new road development should incorporate bike friendly features
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	Such large-scale reduction in traffic on Main Street will facilitate more adventurous use of the road space for pedestrians and cyclists
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Improve cycle paths and pedestrian crossings
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The Local Authority is committed to addressing local transportation issues and following the adoption of this LAP, the Local Authority is committing to preparing a Local Transport Plan, which will evaluate and address all the issues detailed above including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement of facilities and routes for pedestrian and cyclists across the entire settlement;</li> <li>To significantly improve pedestrian infrastructure along all roads within Blessington prioritising all locations within 15 minutes' walk times of school and public transport services and;</li> <li>To significantly improve cycling infrastructure along all main routes (regional roads, primary local roads and other distributor roads) within the Blessington area.</li> </ul> <p>The Draft Blessington Local Area Plan includes a range of objectives in relation to the improvement of infrastructure for active travel users, including objectives BLESS43 and BLESS45. Map No. 6 Active Travel Strategy includes those routes included in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network, additional local and greenway feeder routes, greenfield/brownfield active travel routes, and pedestrian permeability improvements. Works to roads must have regard to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the Cycle Design Manual 2023.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



### B.7.5 Accessibility & Safety

No.	Name	Issues Raised
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	WCC should aim to take charge of all public roads and footpaths in the town to ensure proper maintenance. Address issues with overgrown tree roots, trip hazards, broken paving and roads
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	WCC should maintain all public roads and footpaths, addressing issues such as overgrown tree roots, broken paving
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>Street / road maintenance and taking in charge are not matters for a land use framework such as a local area plan. However, these concerns have been noted and will be brought to the attention of the department responsible. Note that the Draft Blessington LAP Written Statement states the following:</p> <p><i>'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.'</i></p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## B.7.6 Electricity Supply, Water and Sewerage Infrastructure

### B.7.6.1 Waste Water Treatment Plant

No.	Name	Issues Raised
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 133645</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blessington reservoir is under significant environmental and infrastructure stress, and the LAP must account for these critical issues to protect water quality and ensure sustainable growth;</li> <li>▪ The reservoir faces ongoing algal blooms, which authorities have not adequately addressed, and further pressure could cause a situation similar to Lough Neagh's;</li> <li>▪ Blessington town relies on a 5.5km outfall pipe for wastewater, which is outdated, unassessed and at risk due to its location along the N81, especially with future road upgrades. The discharge into County Kildare was increased without proper consultation or planning approval, making it an illegal discharge;</li> <li>▪ The wastewater treatment plant's EPA license (D0063-1) is outdated, and no review has been sought for its expanded capacity (9,000pe);</li> <li>▪ The discharge point is routinely emptied by the ESB for dam overhaul work;</li> <li>▪ The water treatment plant at Ballymore Eustace already operates above its legal abstraction limit, and the discharge into the River Liffey has non-compliance issues;</li> <li>▪ Blessington Town's urban runoff, poor surface water quality controls, and misconnected drains exacerbate the pollution risk to the reservoir;</li> <li>▪ There is insufficient drinking water capacity to support future growth, as Uisce Éireann already exceeds its abstraction limit. The East and Midland (Shannon) Scheme will not resolve this within the lifetime of the LAP;</li> <li>▪ The draft LAP lacks comprehensive surface water management or mitigation measures, increasing contamination risks to the reservoir;</li> <li>▪ Blessington Lakes supply 85% of Dublin's drinking water, and the Liffey is already over-abstracted, with projections indicating a future reduction in water availability.</li> </ul> <p>It is put forward that reference to surface water infrastructure in the Draft LAP is totally deficient given the very important location of Blessington Town. The LAP should provide data on the current surface water system in Blessington – number of sewer chokes per year, misconnection surveys, Storm Water Overflow statistics, Flood records, stream cleaning work etc.</p>
21	<a href="#">Thomas Deegan, Honorary Secretary, Ballymore Eustace Trout and Salmon Anglers' Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 144509</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorrect statement in the SEA that the River Liffey flows through the Poulaphouca Gorge must be corrected as it is used by Úisce Éireann and WCC to obtain planning permission and waste water discharge licenses;</li> <li>▪ Planning permission for the upgrade of the WWTP to 9000 P.E. obtained on the false pretense that discharge is into a river of 1.5m<sup>3</sup>/sec minimum flow when in fact there is no flow pass the Blessington WWTP discharge point up to 97% of the time;</li> <li>▪ In the year 2000 the EPA described Golden Falls Lake/Reservoir as being Hypertrophic, i.e. a very high level of pollution and a very high level of impairment of use of the Lake. The ESB waste water discharge license agreement for 6000 P.E. has not been updated;</li> <li>▪ WWTP is already over capacity;</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It took a long time for Uisce Éireann to admit that all their data for the Blessington WWTP upgrade and WWDL discharge is false. All the data now needs to be corrected and for Golden Falls Lake/Reservoir to be declared a totally unsuitable location for the Blessington WWTP discharge.</li> </ul>
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 172755</a>	The draft LAP notes there is sufficient wastewater capacity to service the landbank at Blessington Demesne

#### Chief Executive Response

The operation of Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant, and relevant EPA licencing, is a matter for Uisce Éireann and it outside of the remit of the local area plan. Consultation with Uisce Éireann indicates that the Waste Water Treatment Plan would serve the level of growth envisioned by the Wicklow County Development Plan Core Strategy over the plan period.

In relation to water abstraction and water supply, consultation with Uisce Éireann has indicated that there is water supply capacity available over the plan period, based on the Wicklow County Development Plan population targets.

With respect to algal blooms and the monitoring of water quality within the lake catchment, Wicklow County Council, along with a number of state agencies, including but not limited to the EPA, NPWS and Uisce Éireann is committed to working to ensure water quality is improved and no development that might arise on foot of this land use plan would contribute to water quality deterioration.

Attention to drawn to the range of objectives with respect to water quality and environmental protections already set out in the Wicklow CDP which will apply directly in the plan area such as;

*'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.'*

However on foot of these submissions and those of other state agencies, the CE recommends some additional text and objectives be included in the Blessington LAP as set out to follow.

Issues in relation to statements made in the SEA and AA reports regarding the flow of the River Liffey are addressed in **Section 5 SEA and AA** of this report.

#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

Add the following text and objectives to Section B.7:

The 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.*



#### B.7.6.2 ESB network

No.	Name	Issues Raised
195	<a href="#">Gerard Gilvary</a> <a href="#">Ref 140548</a>	Any future electricity trunk network improvements should be placed underground around the bypass
196	<a href="#">Catherine Kehoe</a> <a href="#">Ref 140503</a>	Place cabling underground
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The Blessington TCF Plan shares the view that significant improvements could be made to the public realm by removing electricity poles and placing cables underground. It has identified this objective for implementation within the medium-term timeframe (1-3 years).</p> <p>Section B.1 of the Draft LAP highlights that public realm and other road improvement schemes within Blessington could provide an opportunity to implement underground cabling along Blessington Main Street.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		

#### B.7.7 General

No.	Name	Issues Raised
135	<a href="#">Sue Rossiter</a> <a href="#">Ref 180552</a>	Suggests upgrading of the bridges on the lake in collaboration with the ESB
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
Maintenance of bridges across the Poulaphouca Reservoir is a matter for the ESB at the present time.		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



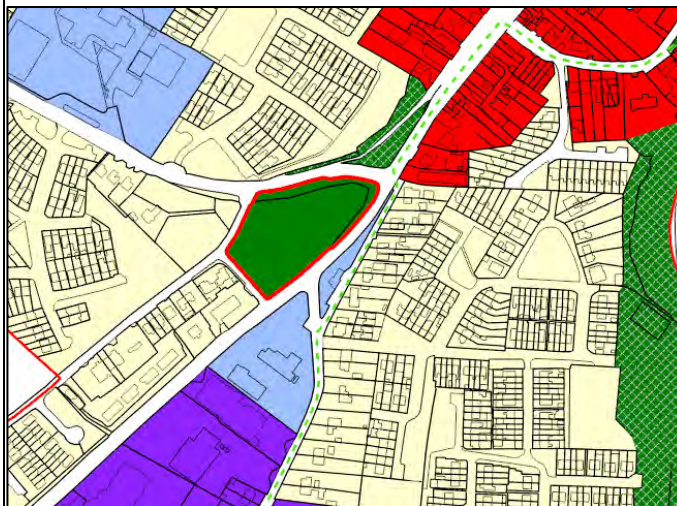
## Part B.8 Zoning

### B.8.1 Zoning Requests

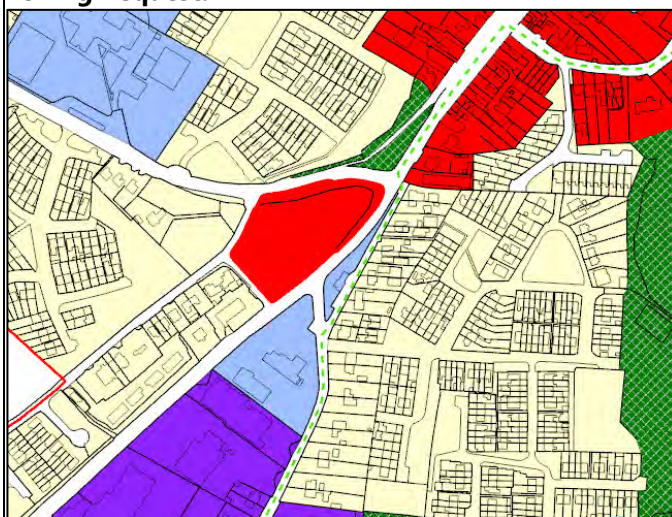
No.	Name	Issues Raised
15	<a href="#">Joan and Billy Flynn</a> <a href="#">Ref 150523</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 1ha of lands at Blessington, zoned OS1 'Open Space' in the draft LAP, be zoned TC 'Town Centre'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on the description of the OS1 zoning and its appropriate uses, it is clear that the draft LAP envisages a public use on the land. However, the land is privately owned.</li> <li>▪ No rationale is provided in the written statement to explain the need for adding the subject site to the land that was previously zoned open space, and removing the current town centre zoning objective.</li> <li>▪ Based on a calculated shortfall the Social Infrastructure Audit concludes that 9.3ha should be zoned for additional OS1 use. However, this analysis is flawed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An open space audit of open space needs that is related to the catchment population should take into account the available open space facilities within the catchment area both inside and outside the town. Many of the existing open space facilities are provided outside the town as acknowledged on pg. 52 of the Audit.</li> <li>- The Audit fails to include a qualitative assessment of current open space facilities provided in the town, in contrast to the report into the community and recreational needs of the Baltinglass Municipal District.</li> <li>- The recommended figure of 9.3ha to be zoned for additional OS1 use is flawed because it is based on comparison with existing zoned lands rather than existing facilities. The future additional supply needed to accommodate the increased population can be more than adequately met with the new town park and the SLO1 area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The fact that planning permission was relatively recently refused (WCC Reg. Ref. 23/60307) for reasons relating to the single retail use, design issues and traffic and transport assessment, should not form a reason to abandon the objective to seek an active town centre use on the subject site.</li> <li>▪ Zoning the land for open space removes the future development of this site as an opportunity site within the town with potential for a landmark building or buildings to 'frame' the Main Street Town Centre core at its south western end.</li> <li>▪ The site is not of special value in terms of biodiversity that would justify its retention in its current natural state or include it in the Green Infrastructure for the town. The designation of Local Biodiversity Area is not justified. An Ecological Impact Assessment was carried out in September 2023 and concluded: <i>'The construction and operation mitigation proposed for the development satisfactorily addresses the mitigation of potential impacts on the sensitive receptors through the application the standard construction and operation phase controls. The overall impact on the ecology of the proposed development will result in a long term minor adverse not significant residual impact on the ecology of the area and locality overall'</i>. The refusal reasons for the recent proposed development did not include concerns about impact on ecology or biodiversity.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:**



**Zoning Request:**



**Chief Executive Response**

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.

In relation to the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, while issues are raised in relation to the exact calculation of required areas, the areas required are stated as **minimum** areas (e.g. pg. 58 of the audit). On this basis, if another reason arises for lands to be zoned OS1, beyond the needs of social infrastructure that may be taken into account regardless of any area requirement. Recommended Objective 5 of the Social Infrastructure Audit states the following: *'Additional OS1 'Open Space' land may be required to account for the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit and Blessington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, where relevant.'* This is restated as having been taken into account in a footnote on pg. 70 of the Audit. As indicated above, the rationale for the zoning of the subject lands was indeed informed by the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit.

On this basis, it is not recommended to zone the subject lands TC 'Town Centre'.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
16	<a href="#">Lesley McGuire</a> <a href="#">Ref 151322</a>	<p>It is requested that lands of c. 2.9ha at Edmondstown, outside the settlement boundary and without a specific land use zoning objective in the Draft LAP, be zoned for residential development. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Local Area Plan is deficient as no rationale is provided for the revision of the settlement boundary of the town, other than in relation to the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA. In the absence of such a rationale, the settlement boundary of the current LAP should be re-adopted.</li> <li>▪ It is noted that the Local Area Plan fails to examine the reasons why previously zoned lands have not been developed, e.g. Doran's Pit, lands west of the N81. In the absence of such development alternative approaches including zoning alternative lands, should be considered.</li> <li>▪ The Development Plan Guidelines highlight the need to take stock of existing zoned land that has remained undeveloped before a new development plan is prepared, with Section 10.8 of the Planning Act stating that there shall be no presumption in law that any land zoned in a particular development plan shall remain so zoned in any subsequent development plan. The draft Local Area Plan fails to provide evidence that this was done.</li> <li>▪ Given the importance that is attached in both the county development plan and the draft Local Area Plan to the outer bypass, it is surprising to note that a large section of the bypass route falls outside the settlement boundary. This bypass was also included as an objective in the previous LAP.</li> <li>▪ The Draft LAP proposed to divide the housing land that is needed between lands within the existing built up area (30%) and lands outside the existing built up area (max. 70%). However, it is noted that the Local Area Plan does not provide any quantitative targets or capacities in relation to the zoned lands.</li> <li>▪ Examination of the Specific Local Objectives demonstrates that no additional lands have been zoned in the new Local Area Plan that were not already zoned in the previous Local Area Plan but have remained undeveloped since 2013. There is no information to suggest that these lands will be developed during the period of the draft local area plan.</li> <li>▪ The lack of delivery of housing development on zoned lands during the lifetime of the previous Local Area Plan is a matter of concern. The planning authority is requested to consider the subject site for rezoning given the commitment of the landowner to develop the land and given the location of the subject site within the route of the future bypass for the town, alongside the N81 within the town boundary.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:**



**Zoning Request<sup>1</sup>**



**Chief Executive Response**

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 particular, the key design aim in delivering sustainable communities is to reduce, as far as possible, the need to travel, particularly by private car, by facilitating mixed-use development and by promoting the efficient use of suitable land. The sequential approach specifies that zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped serviced lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference, encouraging infill opportunities, and that areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

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

<sup>1</sup> Issues in relation to phasing were not raised in the submission, therefore the request is illustrated as RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2'



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)
- Comprise extension and sprawl of the settlement into the unzoned countryside surrounding the settlement; comprise unacceptable 'leapfrogging' given the existence of other unzoned lands between the site and the plan boundary and would therefore contravene compact and sustainable growth principles; and would result in a car dependent residential zone having regard to the lack of active travel infrastructure along the N81 in this area.

It is agreed that a rationale for the alteration of the settlement boundary is not explicitly stated in the Draft Blessington LAP 2025 Written Statement; therefore the inclusion of text setting out this rationale is recommended, as indicated below.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

#### Amend plan as follows:

Add new text to **Section A.4**

#### **A.4 OVERALL STRATEGY**

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, cycling and public transport facilities. There are a number of sites that has the potential 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 Ding.*

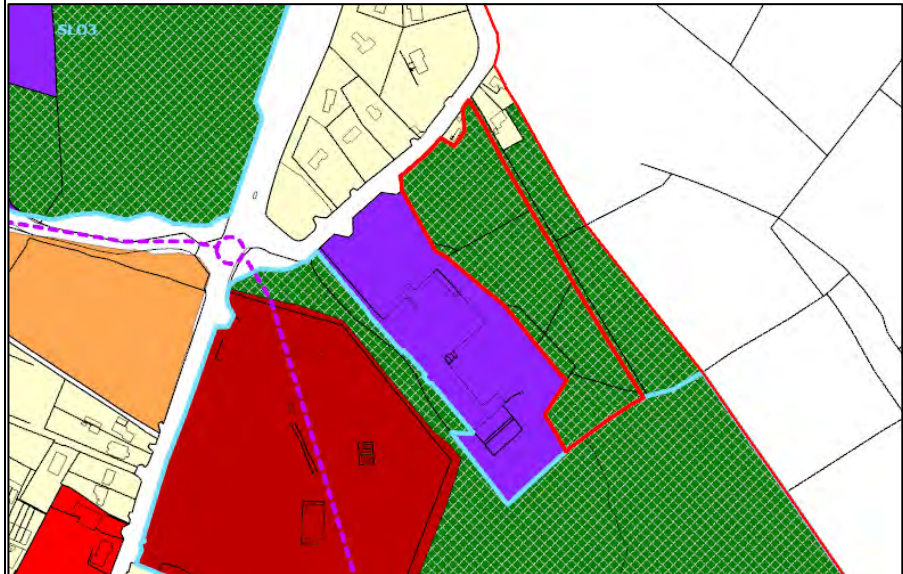


No.	Name	Issues Raised
103	<b><a href="#">J. P. &amp; M. Doyle Ltd.</a></b> <a href="#">Ref 140434</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 2.2ha of lands at Holyvalley, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in the draft LAP, be zoned E' Employment'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The significant reduction in the existing zoned land directly affects the submitter's ability to address and implement future growth requirements at the Mart. The site was specifically selected over 60 years ago for potential expansion and it remains critical to the on-going viability of the Mart.</li> <li>▪ The proposal to dezone is not consistent with the draft LAP's recognition that 'economic development and employment is one of the key elements in delivery sustainable communities' and the LAP seeking 'to promote the intensification of activities on existing employment sites and to take advantage of the existing economic assets of the town'. A high rate of commuting out of Blessington will continue without sufficient employment land.</li> <li>▪ The draft LAP proposes to reduce employment land in Blessington from 94.4ha to 62ha (Table 4.1), a loss of 34%. There is no planning justification for this reduction, which would prevent Mart expansion and reduce the market for employment growth due to fewer sites and the inequitable provision of 41.9h at former quarry lands.</li> <li>▪ The provision of undeveloped employment zoned land at the Mart provides for potential development of over 10,000sqm additional floor area with a consequent 130-150 additional employers/persons attending the Mart. The Mart is a longstanding employer in Blessington.</li> <li>▪ That rationale for the OS2 zoning is stated that as being where there are existing undeveloped lands, and the development of these lands is not essential for the achievement of the development vision and strategic objectives for the town. The proposed OS2 lands at the Mart form part of the historic planning unit of the Mart, they are actively used in the operation of the Mart, foul drainage and water services are within the proposed OS2 lands. The existing employment zoning is essential for the future economic opportunities with the Mart and therefore should not be considered for OS2 zoning.</li> </ul> <p>It is further requested that the indicative cycling and pedestrian link at the southern/rear boundary Blessington Mart be omitted from Figure B.8.5 and moved off the Blessington Mart site and onto the adjoining OS2 lands to the northeast on Map No. 6: Active Travel Strategy. In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Following on from the request to reinstate the employment zoning at the Mart, there is no planning reason to retain an indicative pedestrian and cycling link into the Mart. If the OS2 zoning to the northeast of the Mart is retained, it would be more appropriate to show the indicative link into that OS2 land.</li> <li>▪ There is no key green infrastructure in the historic planning unit of the Mart – see Map No. 3 Key Green Infrastructure. There is a green corridor</li> </ul>

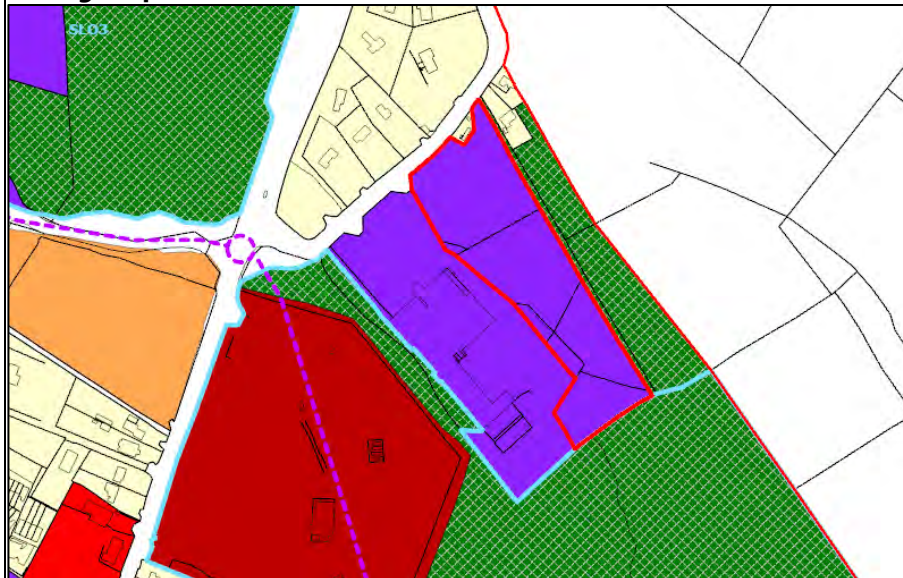


adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site. It would be more suitable for the indicative route as opposed to through the Blessington Mart site, which is not compatible with active travel proposals.

**Draft LAP:**



**Zoning Request:**



**Chief Executive Response**

Having reviewed this request and the land condition, the CE is satisfied to recommend that the additional area of land as proposed be zoned for employment use. It is essential however that these lands are the limit to development zoning at this location as the lands adjoining same to the north and east are steeply sloping in the direction of a watercourse which feeds directly into the Poulaphouca Reservoir European Site SPA to the east. Development on these lands for development purposes would likely require significant land form changes and changes to the natural drainage patterns. It is considered that such changes would present an unacceptable risk of adverse impacts on the SPA downstream, and therefore development zoning is not considered appropriate.

The CE is not opposed to the omission of the active travel route through the lands.

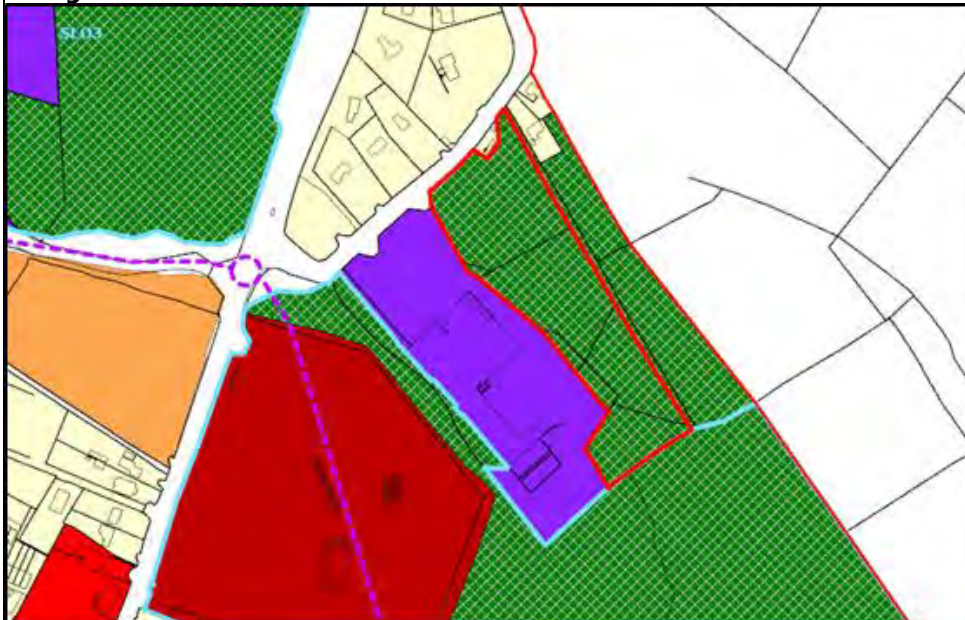


## Chief Executive's Recommendation

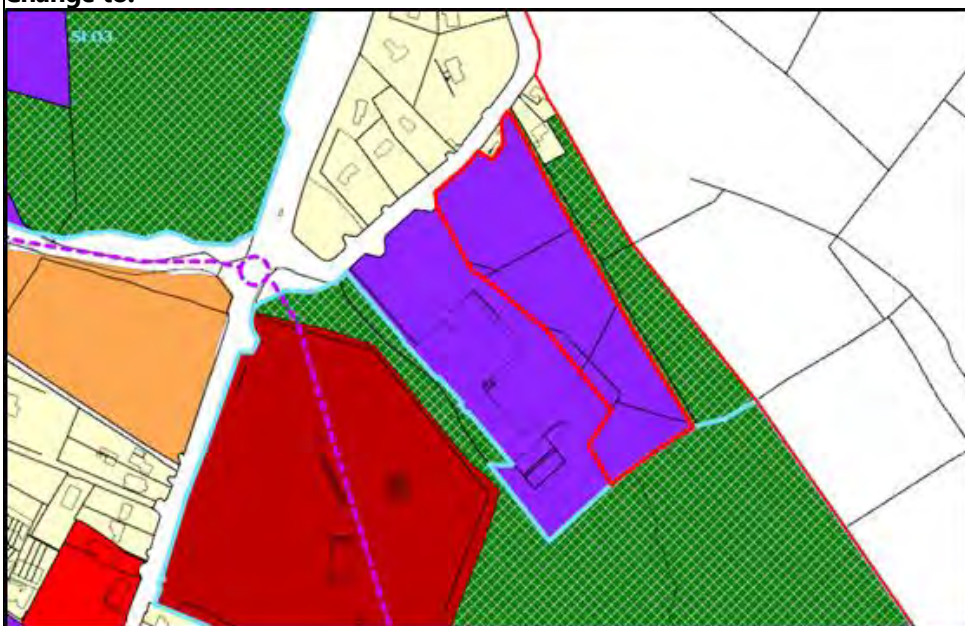
Amend plan as follows:

### Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives

Change from:



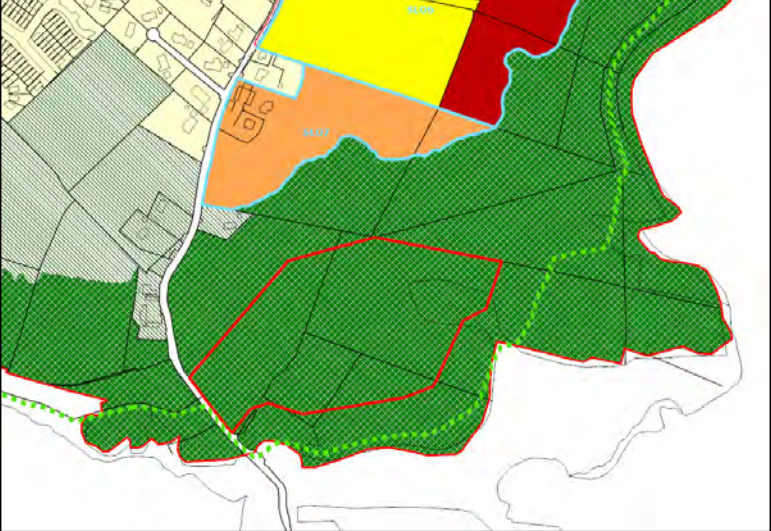
Change to:



### Map No. 6 Active Travel Strategy

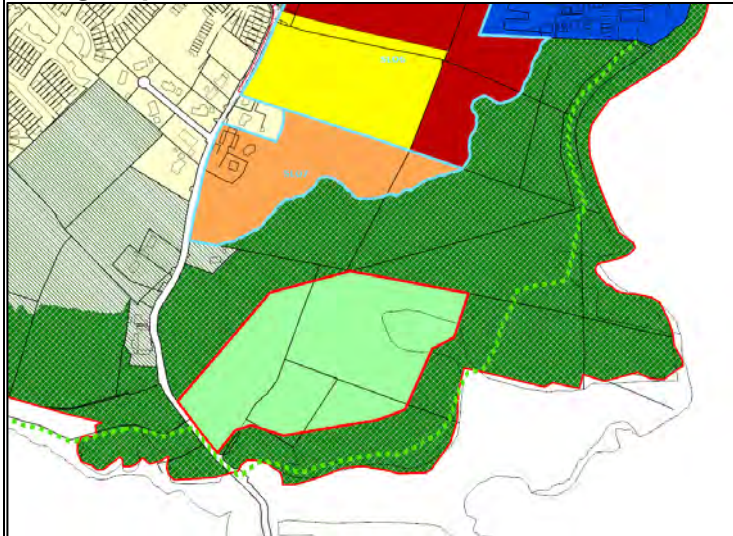
Omit the relevant active travel objective through the lands.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
127	<a href="#">Blessington &amp; District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	<p><b>Request 1:</b> It is requested that c. 6.6ha of land at Burgage More, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The only section of lands to be zoned AOS are owned by Cairn Homes, other than mixed-use areas. Neither gives any opportunity to the local clubs of the town to purchase and develop their own amenities.</li> <li>▪ None of the previous AOS lands from the 2013-2019 LAP were utilised. There are 4 local clubs with no facilities within the town and the GAA is at full capacity.</li> <li>▪ Lands at Burgage More should be zoned AOS. The lands are owned by ESB so are state-owned and would offer clubs a greater chance of purchasing these lands than other sites.</li> <li>▪ Zoning these lands as Natural Open Space is a huge waste of lands, where there are constraints already (lake, N81 upgrade, quarries).</li> <li>▪ These lands, from previous Bird Surveys and Ecological Assessments, have not encountered Greylag Goose or Lesser Black Backed Gull. An ecological Assessment conducted for NDFA &amp; WCC on lands to the north explains that the main area for the Greylag Goose is outside the town. A Winter Bird survey Report in 2021 by MKO reviewed these lands at Burgage More and reported no Graylag Goose sightings or droppings within a 500m surrounding area. The increase for biodiversity areas do not need to be located here.</li> <li>▪ The requested AOS zoning includes the doubling of biodiversity lands in this area compared to the Blessington LAP 2013-2019.</li> <li>▪ Greenway parking in these proposed AOS lands is much needed in this area, with the only parking within the Avon being full and cars being abandoned by Burgage Graveyard.</li> <li>▪ The lands are not in areas of flood risk as per Map No. 4 Flood Risk.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p> 



### Zoning Request 1:



### Request 2:

It is requested that c. 0.9ha of lands at Santryhill, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned for a Park & Ride (c. 0.6ha) and a playground (c. 0.3ha) [The exact requested zonings are unclear, however the most appropriate to suit the requested uses would be PU 'Public Utility' and AOS 'Active Open Space']. A possible 1km forest trail is also indicated. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:

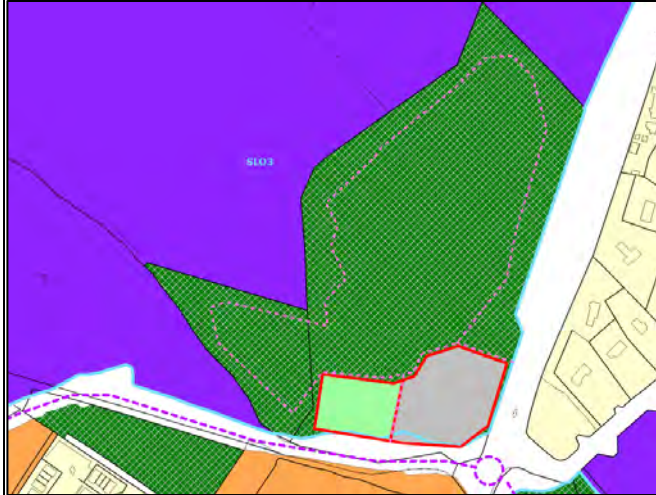
- The Park & Ride for Blessington should be located to the north of the town purely from a cost point of view. If the LUAS/other infrastructure goes ahead in the future, it would not be built through or around the town, locating the P&R on the Dublin side will aid the feasibility of such projects, and could also be used for commuters using express buses.
- Playground area has residential zoned land to the south.
- Removal of a small section of biodiversity area for Park & Ride to be exchanged to adjacent lands.

### Draft LAP:





**Zoning Request 2 (incl. suggested active travel route):**

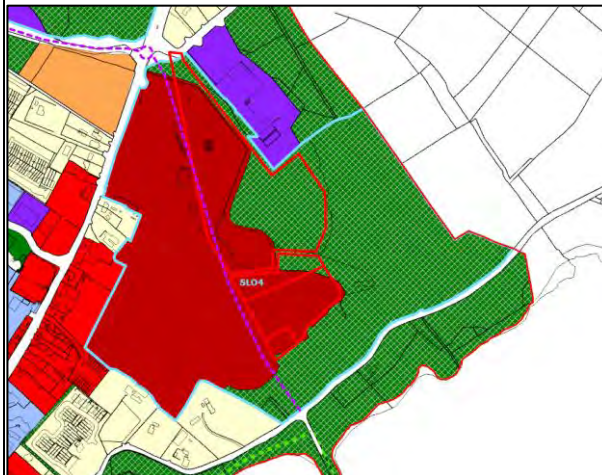


**Request 3:**

It is requested that c. 8.6ha of lands at Haylands, zoned MU 'Mixed Use' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space', CE 'Community & Education', T 'Tourism', and PU 'Public Utility' [The exact requested zonings are unclear, however the most appropriate zoning to suit the requested uses would be those above]. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:

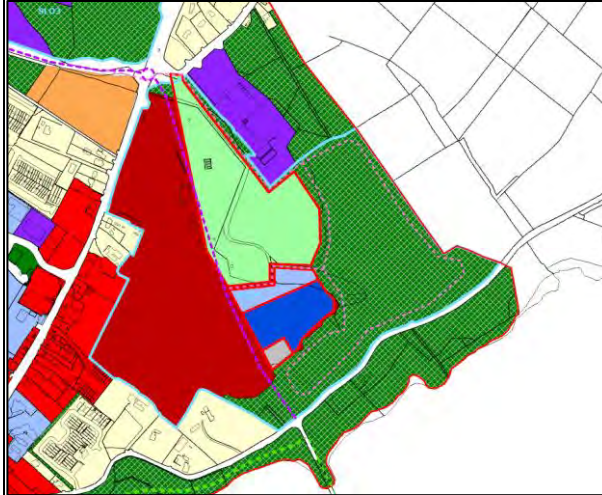
- The rezoning would see an increase in AOS lands but the retaining of biodiversity areas which could be utilised as a forestry walkway with a walkway linking Haylands & Santryhill.
- Multiple infrastructure projects could be completed on these lands including the N81-Knockieran Bridge road, tourism centre and glamping facility (with possible viewpoint with lake views), community centre, greenway parking in a central location close to the proposed Greenway, all while earmarking lands for much-needed sports facilities.
- Lands should be zoned as such for the upcoming LAP with the AOS lands to be developed before any residential development can take place.
- In conjunction with the lands at Santryhill, CPO should be considered. RZLT may not be implemented and will have no impact on a company with very large revenue/profits.

**Draft LAP:**





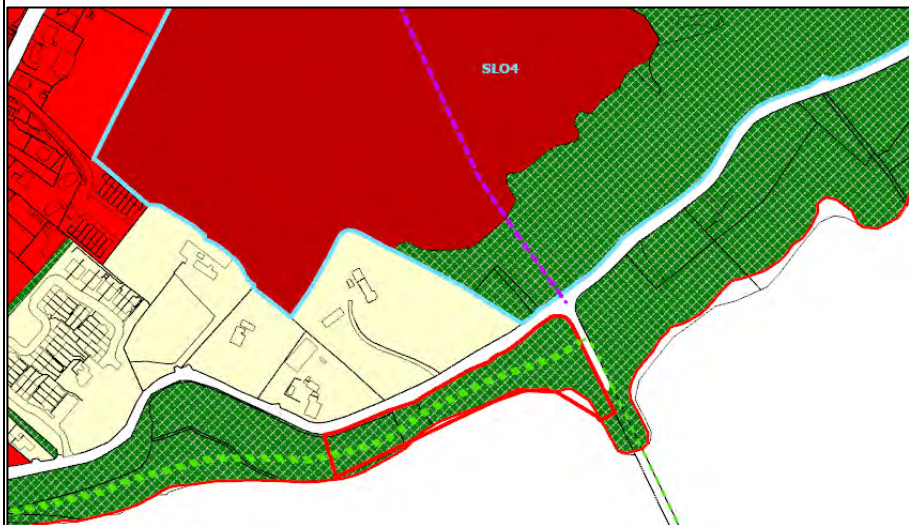
**Zoning Request 3 (incl. suggested active travel route):**



**Request 4:** It is requested that c. 1ha of lands at Haylands, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' and partially without a specific land use zoning in the Draft LAP, be zoned T 'Tourism'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:

- The lands are owned by ESB and so have a greater chance of being utilised to benefit tourism.
- The lands are located along the proposed Greenway, close to the town and proposed greenway hub, proposed greenway parking and possible tourist centre.
- The other areas zoned tourism in the Draft LAP do not have any access point to the lake.
- The lands could be used for Kayak or Paddle Board hire, a small coffee shop, and a section of the lake to be dredged/sectioned off for a natural small swimming pool/plunge area. Others access the lake at the Avon/Baltyboys. Further areas can be safe and could be excellent assets to the town.

**Draft LAP:**





### Request 1

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. This assessment states:

*The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.'*

The CE would also have serious concerns in relation to access to the requested AOS lands, noting that the proposal includes car parking for c. 78 vehicles. The access along Burgage More is constrained, being single carriageway in places. Any widening of this road would involve the removal of significant lengths of hedgerows



and mature trees. Map No. 5 Transport Strategy indicates the road in question as operating as a local street only, and the text of SLO7 states the following: *'Development within this SLO shall maintain the hedgerows and rural character of Burgage More lane to the west and provide an appropriate buffer to this lane for such purposes.'* It is not the view of the CE that this road should be significantly widened in the near future.

Furthermore, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the quantum of AOS lands within the draft plan. Issues have not been raised in relation to any shortcoming in the Social Infrastructure Audit, with the Draft Plan providing for an increase in the quantum of lands reserved for AOS in comparison to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

### **Request 2**

In relation to Request 2, the proposed creation of AOS lands and a park and ride would result in the removal of significant areas of existing woodland, contrary to the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit.

Map No. 5 Transport Strategy indicates a potential car parking location a short distance away in Doran's Pit, alongside other locations to the south and west of the town. An additional car parking area in this location is therefore considered not warranted.

Furthermore, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the quantum of AOS lands within the draft plan. Issues have not been raised in relation to any shortcoming in the Social Infrastructure Audit, with the Draft Plan providing for an increase in the quantum of lands reserved for AOS in comparison to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019.

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. No amendments to the draft plan on foot of this request are recommended in that assessment.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

### **Request 3**

In relation to Request 3, the use of the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning objective in this location is to ensure flexibility to the location of the desired different uses within this block, having regard to the uncertain final route of the road objective through Doran's Pit.

The quantum of uses within this MU 'Mixed Use' zone is set out in text within SLO4 and the accompanying concept plan. Zoning for each individual requested use in this area is not recommended.

The increase in AOS zoning suggested would remove an area of OS2 'Natural Areas' lands in conflict with the recommendations of the Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. Furthermore, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the quantum of AOS lands within the draft plan. Issues have not been raised in relation to any shortcoming in the Social Infrastructure Audit, with the Draft Plan providing for an increase in the quantum of lands reserved for AOS in comparison to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019. On this basis, the above request is not recommended.

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. No amendments to the draft plan on foot of this request are recommended



in that assessment.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

#### **Request 4**

In relation to Request 4, the lands requested to be rezoned are immediately adjoining to the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA and slope steeply down to the lakeshore. This area was previously within the buffer zone to the reservoir as per the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019, and has been zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in line with Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. Any development on this land, which would necessitate land form changes / site leveling and changes to natural drainage, as well as risk of run-off and overspill impacts from public lighting, would have a very high likelihood of resulting in adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation objectives of the European Site adjoining.

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. No amendments to the draft plan on foot of this request are recommended in that assessment.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

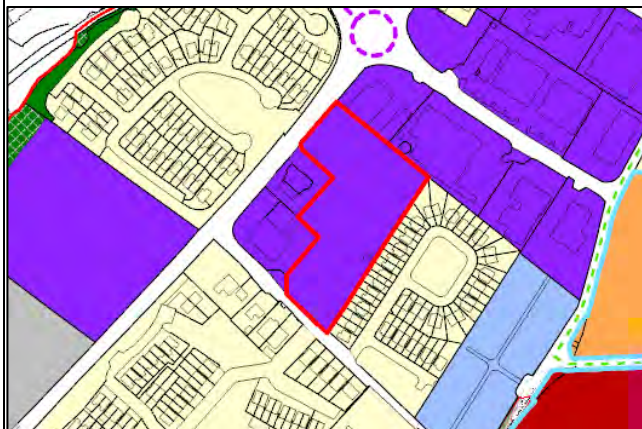
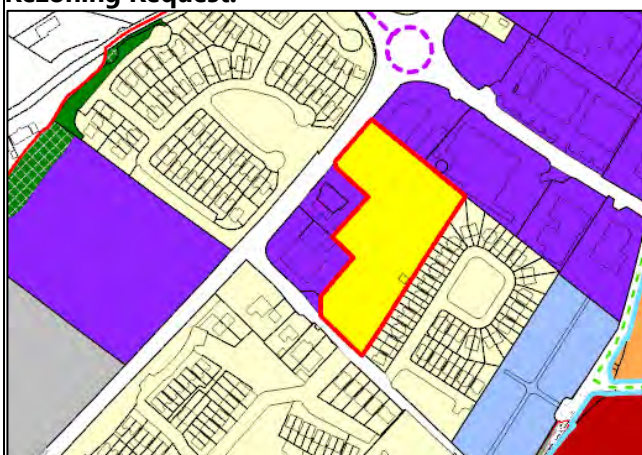
#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
130	<a href="#">Embankment</a> <a href="#">Plastics</a> <a href="#">Ref 163003</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 1.3ha of lands at Burgage More, zoned E 'Employment' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subject lands are bound by development on 4 sides, making it an infill site.</li> <li>▪ The lands are within short walking/cycling distance of a range of services and amenities - retail, childcare, healthcare, schools, and personal services.</li> <li>▪ It is immediately adjacent to a bus stop and short walking distance of Blessington town centre.</li> <li>▪ The Wicklow CDP 2022-2028 Core Strategy has allocated very limited housing growth figures to Blessington, conflicting with the need to deliver housing in existing settlements of scale.</li> <li>▪ Co. Wicklow's population growth has outstripped national change in recent years. A slightly lower level of growth in Blessington may be due to a shortage of residentially zoned sites that are readily deliverable.. Noted that ESRI has been tasked with revising their methodology for population projections and housing growth allocations in Core Strategies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Housing for All 2021</i> greatly underestimated the actual housing demand, identifying 33,000 units p.a required. Current studies calculate the demand to be 74,000 units p.a. Requested that WCC take an authoritative and progressive stance on its housing requirements and distribution across the County. It is acknowledged that this may require a variation and it is submitted that such an approach is required.</li> <li>▪ Of the 11 sites with 'proposed residential' designations in the Blessington LAP 2013-2019, 2 No. sites have been developed, 3 have planning permission, and 1 site is awaiting a decision on a planning application. Additionally, 5 sites are very unlikely to be suitable for housing delivery in the foreseeable future due to infrastructure deficits, access issues, or phasing requirements. This does not leave any 'proposed residential' sites in Blessington which can realistically be brought forward in the near future. There is significant merit in rezoning the lands at Burgage More from E 'Employment' to R1 'Proposed Residential'. The proposed lands are ready for development as it is submitted that they require no significant offsite infrastructure and are infill in nature.</li> <li>▪ While the desire to provide employment space in the town is laudable, there is currently a glut of commercial properties in the Greater Dublin Area, which is leading to high rates of vacancy of commercial properties.</li> <li>▪ Developing this site will fill a void in the Built-Up Area, can improve pedestrian access to existing footpaths on the N81, and will add to the interconnectedness between existing and future developments.</li> <li>▪ The submitter has a genuine interest in delivering housing on the subject lands. A high-level masterplan has been developed which incorporates pedestrian/cyclist linkages through the site, a sensitive transition from employment to residential lands with appropriate screening, attractive and function landscaping/open space, increased permeability for the existing neighbourhood, convenient access to adjacent bus service, varied densities that respect site attributes and sensitivities.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:****Rezoning Request:****Chief Executive Response**

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 rezoning may undermine the expansion of existing businesses in Blessington or the establishment of new businesses requiring employment lands of this scale.

Therefore, the CE does not recommend the zoning of these lands for residential development.

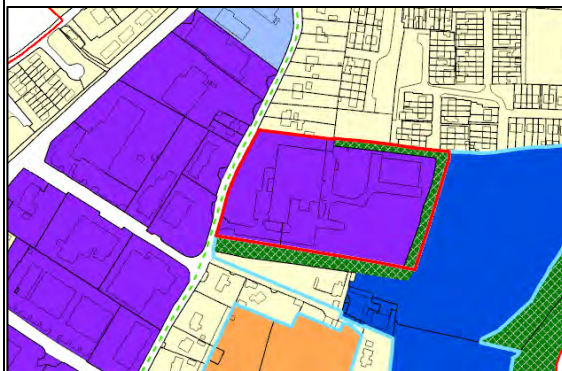
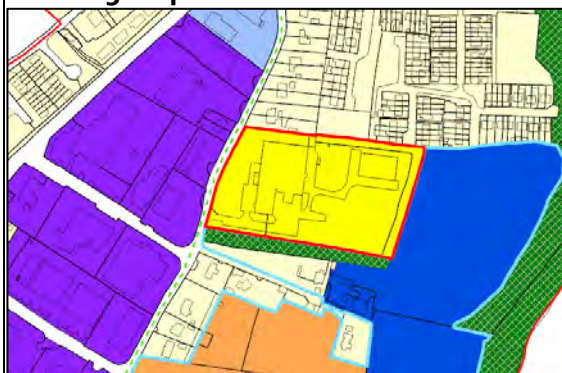
**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
136	<a href="#">Ventac &amp; Company Limited</a> <a href="#">Ref 181627</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 2.7ha of lands at Burgage More, zoned E 'Employment' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned 'RN1 New Residential – Priority 1'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are out forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The site is bounded by existing development on 3 no. sides and land zoned for Active Open Space to the east. It is within the Built Up-Area and presents an opportunity to deliver housing within a short distance of all the amenities of Blessington town centre.</li> <li>▪ The site is within short walking/cycling distance of a range of services, including retail, childcare, healthcare, schools, and personal services.</li> <li>▪ The Wicklow CDP 2022-2028 Core Strategy has allocated very limited housing growth figures to Blessington, conflicting with the need to deliver housing in existing settlements of scale.</li> <li>▪ Co. Wicklow's population growth has outstripped national change in recent years. A slightly lower level of growth in Blessington may be due to a shortage of residentially zoned sites that are readily deliverable. ESRI has been tasked with revising their methodology for population projections and housing growth allocations in Core Strategies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Housing for All 2021</i> greatly underestimated the actual housing demand, identifying 33,000 units p.a. Current studies have calculated the demand to be 74,000 units p.a. Requested that WCC to take an authoritative and progressive stance on its housing requirements and distribution across the County. It is acknowledged that this may require a variation and it is submitted that such an approach is required.</li> <li>▪ Of the 11 sites with 'proposed residential' designations in the Blessington LAP 2013-2019, 2 sites have been developed, 3 sites have planning permission, and 1 site is awaiting a decision. Additionally, 5 No. sites are very unlikely to be suitable for housing delivery in the foreseeable future due to infrastructure deficits, access issues, or phasing requirements. This does not leave any 'proposed residential' sites in Blessington which can realistically be brought forward in the near future.</li> <li>▪ There is significant merit in rezoning the lands from E 'Employment' to R1 'Proposed Residential due to its sustainable location, accessibility and availability of services.</li> <li>▪ Ventac &amp; Company Limited are currently in the process of identifying suitable alternative premises within Blessington that better suits their needs, with the current premises (a former meat processing plant) being no longer suitable.</li> <li>▪ The site present a logical and sequential pattern of urban development, filling a void within the existing Built-Up Area, with the potential creation of a new pedestrian access through the site into the Active Open Space land to the east, presenting the opportunity for passive surveillance of this space.</li> <li>▪ The submitter has a genuine interest in delivering housing on the subject lands. A high-level masterplan for the site incorporates pedestrian/cyclist linkages through the site (which would create a new, safer access from existing residential neighbourhoods to AOS lands to the east), a sensitive transition from employment to residential lands with appropriate screening, attractive/functional landscaping and open space, increased permeability for the existing neighbourhood, convenient access to public transport, and varied densities that respect site attributes and sensitivities.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:****Rezoning Request:****Chief Executive Response**

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. In this case, the subject lands comprise an existing commercial building which could be suitable for range of employment uses were the current occupiers to relocate.

Furthermore, the submission has not addressed the updated context of the subject lands in light of the zoning provisions of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025. Namely, the Draft Plan zones a part of the subject lands OS2 'Natural Areas', for which no justification for rezoning has been set out. Additionally, lands to the east of the subject lands are no longer zoned AOS 'Active Open Space'.

Therefore, the CE does not recommend the zoning of these lands for residential development.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
137	<a href="#">Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 183806</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 1ha of lands at Blessington Demesne, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' and OS1 'Open Space' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' and CE 'Community &amp; Education'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notwithstanding the welcoming of the RN1 zoning on lands owned by the submitter to the south of the lands that are the subject of this submission, the submitter has concerns with respect to the increased area zoned OS2 'Natural Areas';</li> <li>▪ The OS zoning extends c. 25m from the watercourses to correspond with the provision of the Development Plan such as CPO 13.3 and CPO 17.26. However, using zoning designations to define riparian areas introduces unnecessary rigidity to the planning system. Rather, the pragmatic and practical flexibility provided by those CPOs is more appropriate.</li> <li>▪ The Ecological Impact Statement prepared for the LRD planning application on the residential land to the south highlighted that the Deepark watercourse has a 'good status' under the Water Framework Directive, no identified species of note/concern/protection, drainage ditches on the site are of low fisheries value, with the culvert along the Deepark stream being not fish passable. The additional zoned area may not have substantial ecological benefits as there are culverts to the south and north. Table 2 of the statement identifies the Deepark stream as having 'low local value'. Reverting the zoning to the same extent as the Blessington LAP 2013-2019 will ensure the immediate protection of the watercourse but will not result in the undermining of the riparian zoned due to the above CPOs and the findings of the Ecological Impact Statement.</li> <li>▪ Increasing the OS zoning to keep development out of flood risk areas is not required to the extent shown. An overlay demonstrates that the area at risk of flooding is much more contained than the OS area in the Draft LAP. Therefore, it is not necessary to increase the extent of OS lands to prevent development encroaching on flood risk areas, reducing the site's development potential and the opportunity to delivery housing.</li> <li>▪ The lands have increased OS zonings, with OS2 zoning now extending c. 25m from the Newpaddocks watercourse along the eastern stretch of the site and OS1 'Open Space' extending where flood risk is identified. In terms of flood risk, an overlay exercise demonstrates that the area at risk of flooding is much more contained than the OS area zoned in the Draft LAP, therefore it is not necessary to increase the extent of OS lands to prevent development encroaching on flood risk area, reducing the site's development potential and, due to the primary CE 'Community &amp; Education' zoning, impacts the prospects of delivering a range of social/community/recreational uses.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**



It is further requested that the text of 'typical appropriate uses' for the OS1 'Open Space', OS2 'Natural Areas', and AOS 'Active Open Space', be amended to include the following:

**"Additionally, consideration will be given to appropriate 'ancillary urban and residential development', such as site accesses and roads (including vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure) and utilities".**

In support of this text amendment, the following grounds are raised:

- Consideration must be given to facilitating ancillary urban and residential development on OS1, OS2, and AOS lands where such development is necessary to serve or unlock sites which may otherwise be 'landlocked' or prejudiced by way of the zoning of lands, topography or the existing provision of services.
- This approach is used in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- This removes the ambiguity of uses potentially materially contravening a development plan.

**Chief Executive Response**

It is noted that CPO 13.3 and 17.26 include a degree of flexibility, in that a riparian buffer of 'generally' 25m shall be free from inappropriate development along watercourses (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority). However, it is the position of the Chief Executive that zoning a riparian buffer of 25m is the most



effective method in ensuring the protection of riparian buffers of the recommended general minimum width as per CPO 13.3 and 17.26. Flexibility remains in the implementation of the above CPOs for a riparian buffer **greater** than 25m where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.

The Water Framework Directive 'good status' of the Deerpark Stream is noted. However, this good status does not infer that a reduced riparian buffer is appropriate. Furthermore, in relation to issues relating to culverts, ecological value, and the fishery value of the watercourse, the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan includes objectives in relation to the improvement of ecological connectivity along green corridors and watercourses that include culverts, including BLESS39 and BLESS 41, such that a reduced riparian buffer on the assumption of reduced permeability is not warranted, noting that riparian zones can also act as ecological corridors for non-waterborne species, e.g. land based mammals.

On this basis, it is not recommended that zonings corresponding to riparian buffers be reduced or omitted.

In relation to flood risk, note that the **Office of Public Works** has made a submission in relation to the subject lands. Please refer to **Section 6 Addendum, to SFRA** of this report.

It is correct that the indicated OS2 lands in some cases have a greater extent than flood risk. However, as it is not recommended above that zonings corresponding to riparian zones be reduced/omitted, it is immaterial as to whether the indicated flood risk is of a lesser extent on OS2 lands, noting that future scenario flood mapping actually shows a greater extent at risk of flooding than the relevant OS2 lands.

In relation to the OS1 lands, this zoning does correspond to an area of flood risk. The CE 'Community & Education' zoning suggested permits uses that would be considered 'highly vulnerable' in relation to *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management'* Guidelines 2009, and are appropriately zoned OS1 'Open Space'.

Areas in the subject lands are indicated as being at risk of flooding under future scenario flood mapping. As BLESS51 requires that future scenario flood mapping be taken into account, the lands may face development limitations were the rezoning to occur.

On this basis, it is not recommended that zonings corresponding to areas of flood risk be zoned for RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' or CE 'Community & Education'.

In relation to the requested text amendment, the Chief Executive is not opposed and recommends that the amendment be made as set out below.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

**Amend the plan as follows**

#### **Section B.8 Zoning Objectives**

Insert new sentence at end:

*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.*



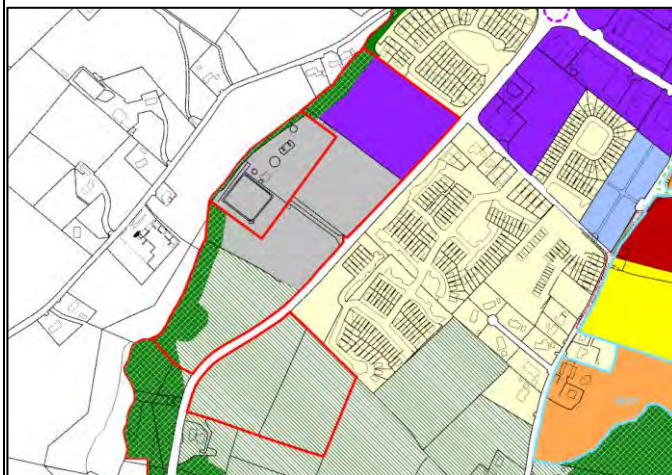
No.	Name	Issues Raised
153	<a href="#">Dunmoy Properties Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 212157</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 12.3ha of lands at Burgage More, zoned E 'Employment', PU 'Public Utility', AG 'Agriculture', and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1', E 'Employment', and AOS 'Active Open Space'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The NPF, Ministerial Guidelines, , the Wicklow CDP, and the Draft LAP set out an approach to zoning land which can be summarized as follows: <i>Those sites to be zoned for residential development should be within the built-up footprint or contiguous to or existing development in the town. The current and anticipated role of housing delivery should be considered in a decision to zone lands. Priority in phasing should be influenced by site location and the availability or proximity to provide off site services, facilities and infrastructure. Sites of equivalent merit to be zoned. Plans must build in sufficient flexibility to allow suitable sites, which may be developed, to come forward during the lifetime of the plan.</i></li> <li>▪ The subject lands are within the settlement boundary, contiguous to existing residential development to the north, east, and under construction/zoned lands in Kildare to the west. The omission of zoned lands in Kildare from LAP maps make the subject lands appear peripheral though this is not the case.</li> <li>▪ Existing NPF housing targets are under review subsequent to the 2022 Census, to account for higher than estimated population growth and pent-up demand. There is an urgent need to facilitate the development of lands that will increase housing supply in the short term on lands that can most quickly and appropriately provide new houses.</li> <li>▪ The proposed re-zoning of lands constitutes a range of uses that will fulfill several key objectives of the national planning policies and guidelines.</li> <li>▪ Site 1 [requested residential] meets all of the above criteria for the land to be zoned for residential development.</li> <li>▪ In the Draft LAP, there are 3 sites zoned RN1, 5 zoned RN2 (3 of which are subject to specific local objectives). SLO1 has not been the subject of any planning application, is c.1000m from the town centre, is reliant on a road objective and the development of a 4ha open space. SLO5 is 1000m from the centre and SLO7 1500m from the same. Two RN2 sites are small in area, with a refusal on the larger of the two. Doran's Pit requires extensive remediation, a road objective, and sports grounds.</li> <li>▪ Submitted that the zoning proposals in this submission are realistic, can be delivered in the short term (with c. 150 dwellings), that the lands are serviced, are within walking distance of the town centre and are contiguous to existing development and infill between east and west (Kildare).</li> <li>▪ Further submitted that the proposals include employment with good access to the road network, active open space and will not require flood lighting which could impact the reservoir as the use could be limited to daylight hours.</li> <li>▪ Submitted that the development would bring much needed improvements to the N81 for traffic safety and access to the lands.</li> <li>▪ The submitter also considers that the volume of dwellings possible on these lands would not have any material impact on the target of housing units for Blessington, which it is noted, will be revised in the near future.</li> <li>▪ The Draft Plan fails to account for the shortcomings of the sites that are proposed for zoning which will impact negatively on delivery. The PU zoning is assumed to allow for the future expansion of the Waste Water</li> </ul>



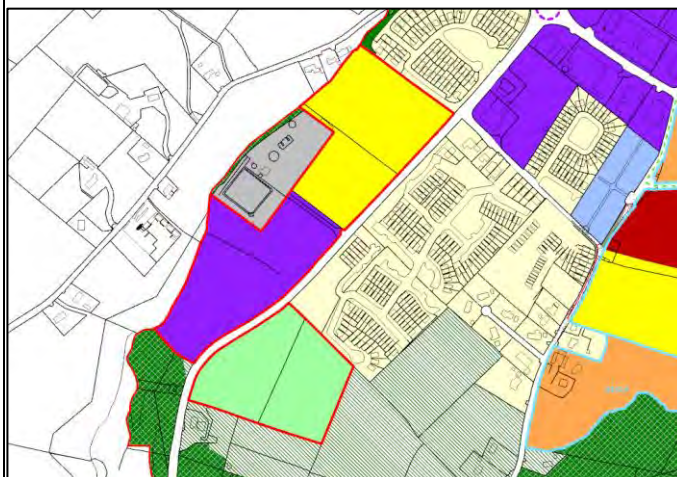
Treatment Plant in the future. However, the capacity of the existing plant can be expanded to a population equivalent of 15,000 people within the existing plant site area. Blessington will never grow to such a level. The Council is urged to confirm with Irish Water that the capacity of the plant can be substantially increased without the need to expand the site of the site. The total PU lands would allow the WWTP to expand to 54,000PE

- The need for employment and parking provision in this part of the town can be better met on the lands indicated of this submission [lands to the south].
- The submission includes an extensive presentation on the rezoning of the subject lands that restates the above grounds for rezoning and sets out the various provisions of the Draft LAP that apply to the subject lands. Additional grounds set out in the document include the following:
  - Additional detail on proposed AOS uses:
  - Additional detail on road realignment/upgrade proposals
  - Additional detail in relation to proposed residential uses (c.153 homes) and employment uses (30 light industrial units, with additional 93 car parking spaces for commuter use).

**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**





### Chief Executive Response

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).

Similarly, the employment provisions of the draft plan are substantial at 44.2ha of undeveloped land zoned for such purposes. While it is noted that the requested employment zoning would be in lieu of the draft E 'Employment' zoning on the northern site, as outlined above the residential rezoning is not recommended. As such, additional employment land is not required at this time.

The requested residential and employment zonings would result in a reduction in PU 'Public Utility' 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. While commentary in the submission argues that the full use of these lands for the treatment of waste water would provide up to 54,000PE, the zoning of these lands as PU 'Public Utility' allows for a wide variety of infrastructure to be developed and allows a degree of flexibility in the eventual use, including the potential of the provision of a park and ride facility along the N81. The rezoning of these lands could therefore undermine the achievement of objective BLESS48.

The accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit appendix includes an audit of sports and recreation future land use needs within the settlement. The draft LAP has already zoned the appropriate amount of land for Active Open Space (AOS), which allows for sports facilities to be developed, for the future needs of the population of the settlement and its catchment. No commentary has been provided in the submission in relation to the any shortcomings Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit or the zoning of lands for AOS 'Active Open Space' purposes in the Draft LAP. Furthermore, the submission provides an assurance that no floodlighting will be used and that any facility developed will be open only during daylight hours. While this is welcomed, it does indicate that it may be a more efficient use of resources for such a facility to be developed in an area where floodlighting would have less of an impact of the reservoir, as during winter months the use of such a facility would be severely curtailed.

On foot of the above, it is not recommended to rezone the subject lands as requested.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

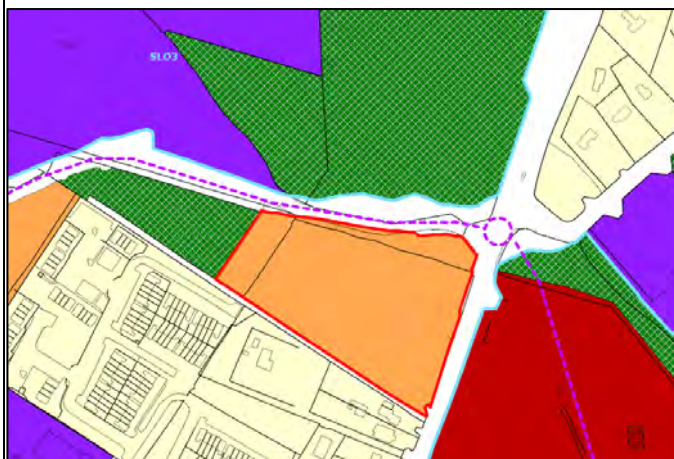
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



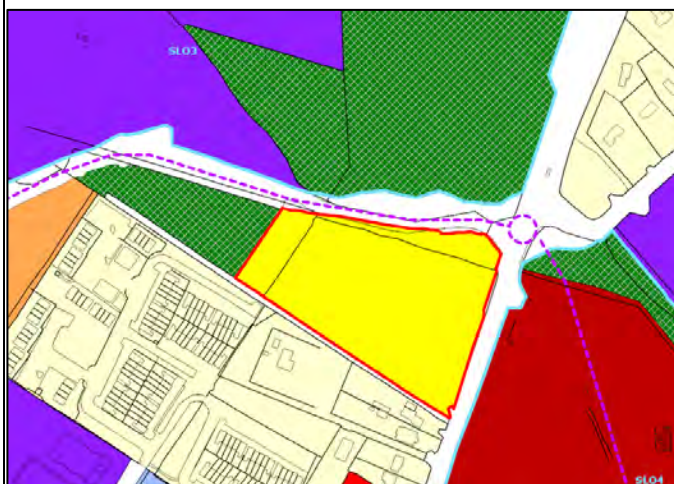
No.	Name	Issues Raised
174	<a href="#">Kelland Homes</a> <a href="#">Ref 101833</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 1.8ha of lands at Santryhill/Newpaddocks, zoned RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neither WCC nor An Bord Pleanála objected in principle to previous residential development proposals at these lands on grounds of Core Strategy or housing allocation for Blessington. The RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' zoning effectively downzones the lands.</li> <li>▪ The recently granted Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR) can provide access to the site, which can be connected to public water and waste water. The potential of the site to support the delivery of the BIRR or part thereof.</li> <li>▪ Increased working from home changed the need for more housing outside Dublin.</li> <li>▪ The scale of the ongoing housing crises, in particular affecting the Greater Dublin Area.</li> <li>▪ The publication of the Draft NPF and agreement of housing targets equivalent to 50,500 new homes per annum, with 30% in settlements beyond the five cities.</li> <li>▪ The enhanced frequency of Dublin Bus services to Blessington, connecting with Tallaght, Dublin City Centre, and the Luas Red Line.</li> <li>▪ The lack of other environmental constraints to the immediate development of the site.</li> <li>▪ The potential of an acceptable housing scheme to be delivered at the site, subject to successfully addressing previous design based refusal reasons.</li> <li>▪ The site is only 12 minutes' walk from Blessington town centre, with active travel modes possible via the BIRR and Woodleigh (reducing carbon emissions), a shorter distance than lands zoned RN1 at Oak Drive, and similar to RN1 lands at Burgage More.</li> <li>▪ Reasons for refusal under WCC Reg. Ref. 21/1396 can be addressed, with issues in relation to the BIRR resolved since permission was granted.</li> <li>▪ The planning authority is minded to grant permission on other lands at Santryhill subject to FI being resolved, where no issue in relation to Core Strategy/housing allocation has been raised. The granting of permission at Burgage Manor under WCC Reg. Ref. 22/574 did not raise issues of the Core Strategy or housing allocation. Therefore there remains capacity in Blessington to absorb modest development. The Wicklow CDP 2022-2028 provides for a flexible application of housing targets to zoned land in case of revision to targets. This acknowledges that the plan does not take account of the Draft NPF 2024. Pending the translation of same into local development plans, the housing allocation of 519 dwellings is overly conservative, despite a housing crisis and those of household forming age leaving Blessington (30.1% drop in those aged 30-39 between the 2016 and 2022 Census).</li> <li>▪ It would be viable to integrate Santryhill with OP8, 200m to the south.</li> <li>▪ Doran's Pit does not have existing sewer connections and would likely require a pumping station and are subject to a specific local objective. The lands at Santryhill are not constrained in any way and should take precedence.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**



**Chief Executive Response**

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).

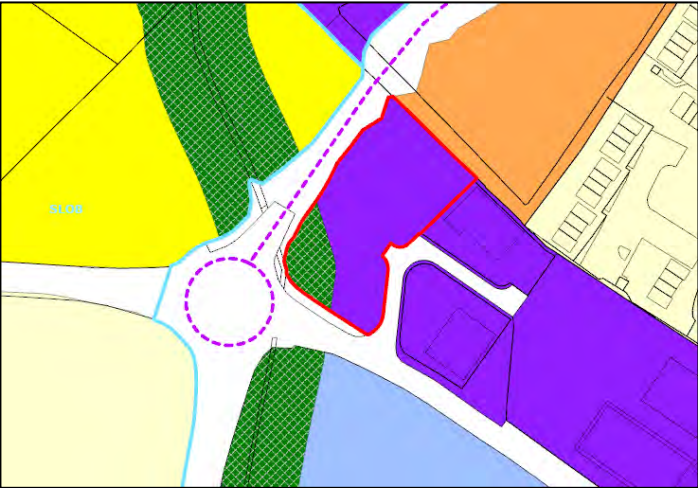
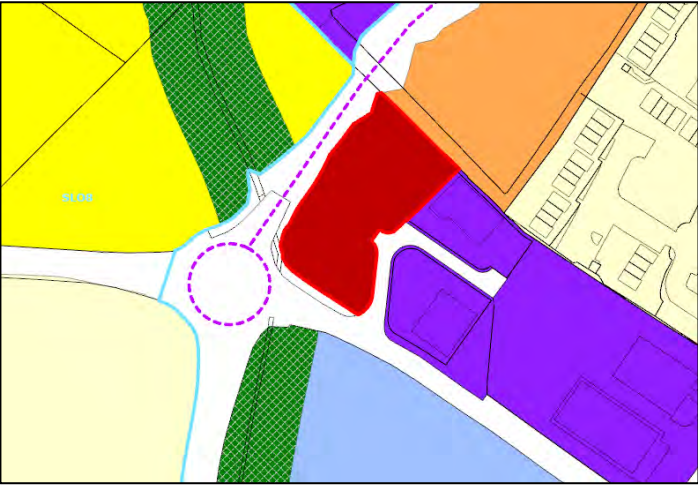
In these regards, the request for the zoning of additional land zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' as detailed in this submission would exceed Core Strategy requirements, including likely longer term requirements, and therefore would be inconsistent with the Wicklow County Development Plan, which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

On foot of the above, it is not recommended to amend the zoning as requested.

**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
176	<a href="#">Jason &amp; John Kelly</a> <a href="#">Ref 102307</a>	<p>It is requested the lands of c. 0.5ha at Blessington Demesne, zoned E 'Employment' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned MU 'Mixed Use'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing the site would create employment in various sectors, with MU 'Mixed Use' zoning allowing the development of businesses that could generate more high-density employment than would be possible under the current zoning.</li> <li>▪ The site is ideally positioned close to new/planned housing developments, schools, GAA pitches, and adjacent to the proposed Blessington Inner Relief Road. There is excellent and safe accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.</li> <li>▪ Rezoning to Mixed Use would allow us to transform the site into a thriving local amenity, offering much needed services such as retail and other community oriented facilities.</li> <li>▪ While the submitters agree that the Main Street should remain the focus for retail activities, they believe a well-planned, convenient, retail and childcare facility at this location would benefit residents and help alleviate some of the parking congestion in the town.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Rezoning Request:</b></p> 



### Chief Executive Response

In relation to the lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas', no justification has been put forward for the rezoning of such lands. This zoning is necessitated to fulfil CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 which states the following:

*'Protect rivers, streams and other water courses by avoiding interference with river / stream beds, banks and channels and maintaining a core riparian buffer zone of generally 25m along watercourses (or other width, as determined by the Planning Authority having particular regard to 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland for urban locations) free from inappropriate development, with undeveloped riparian vegetation strips, wetlands and floodplains generally being retained in as natural a state as possible. Structures such as bridges should be clear span, and designed and built in accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance.'*

On this basis, it is not recommended to rezone the relevant OS2 lands to MU 'Mixed Use'.

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 guidelines.*
- *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.

On the basis of the above, it is not recommended to rezone the subject lands as requested.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
189	<a href="#">Bryko Ltd</a> <a href="#">Ref 130126</a>	<p>It is requested that the settlement boundary be reinstated to the extent of the Blessington town boundary shown on the LAP 2013-2019 Map No.1 around the subject lands, <b>or</b> that lands of c. 1.7ha at Edmonstown, outside the settlement boundary and with no specific land use zoning in the Draft LAP, be zoned E 'Employment'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reference made to text of the Draft LAP and CDP that is an aim of the Wicklow CDP to increase the County's job ratio to 70% by 2031, and that Blessington falls short of what would be desired given its position in the County Economic Development Hierarchy and its strategic economic importance in West Wicklow.</li> <li>▪ Bryko Ltd. is principally involved in the bagging of sand and gravel and operates a rural retail unit located at the premises, including the sale of domestic fuels and animal feeds.</li> <li>▪ The company employs c. 22 people. To support the sustainable and future development of their business, Bryko request that the employment land use zoning area SLO3 be extended northwards to cover their existing premises at Edmonstown.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Rezoning Request:</b> Settlement boundary extension to include indicated area, with no specific land use zoning requested.</p> 



Or

**Zoning of indicated lands to E 'Employment'**



**Chief Executive Response**

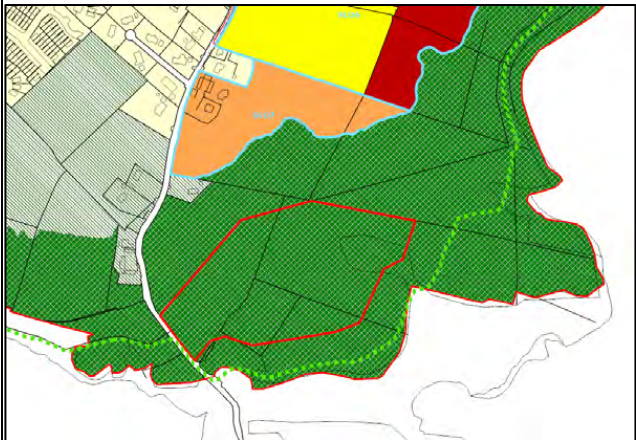
Refer to the recommended amendment set out in response to Submission No. 16 above, in relation to the rationale for the extent of the settlement boundary in the Draft LAP.

While it is noted that the subject lands are immediately adjacent to an area of E 'Employment' lands, the lands to the south are largely undeveloped for this purpose. Therefore, the rezoning of the subject lands to allow for development or intensification of employment uses would constitute peripheral and 'leapfrog' employment development. The policy context of the subject lands remain largely unchanged from the previous Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019, as the subject lands were previously under an AG 'Agricultural Lands' zoning and subject to objectives relating to employment development as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

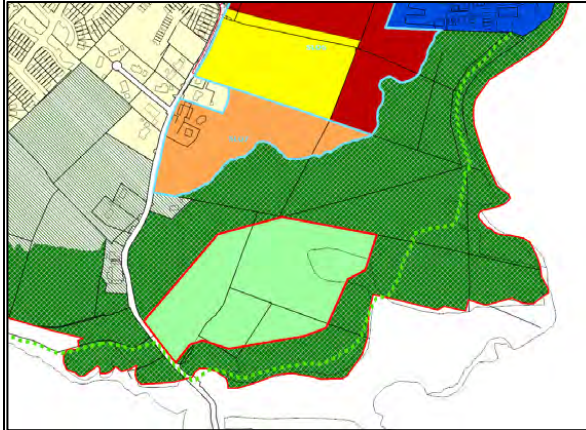
**Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



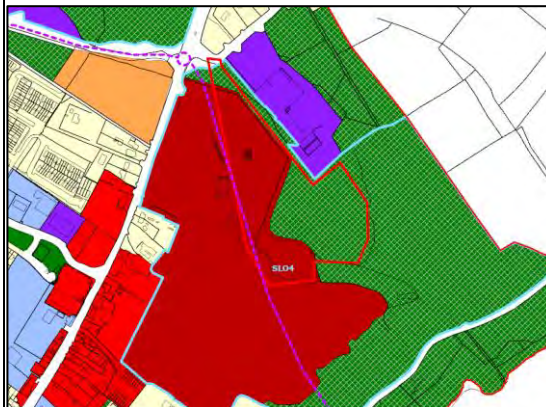
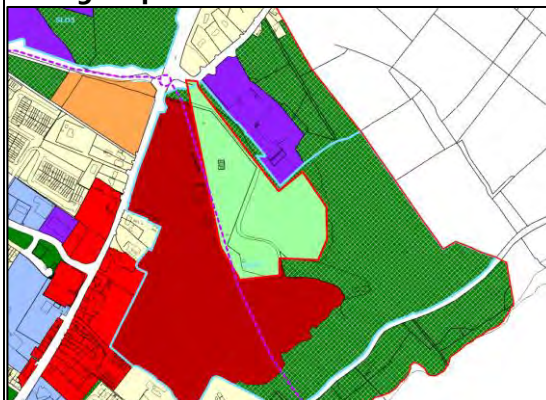
No.	Name	Issues Raised
205	<a href="#">Serpents Basketball Academy Blessington</a> <a href="#">Ref 163620</a>	<p><b>These 2 No submissions are very similar in content and, alongside background information on each club, request the following:</b></p> <p>In relation to the overall quantum of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands within the Draft LAP, the following is stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lands zoned AOS are owned by a developer and a quarry operator and does not give much opportunity for a club to purchase their own land.</li> <li>▪ None of the AOS lands from the Blessington LAP 2013-2019 were utilised.</li> <li>▪ Blessington AFC has outgrown their facilities at Crosschapel, with the club having 800 members</li> <li>▪ The GAA have also outgrown their facilities.</li> <li>▪ Serpents Basketball Academy has c.100 members with c.100 on a waiting list, and rents outdoor and indoor space (with the indoor space being too small).</li> <li>▪ The submitters agree that sports facilities should be developed first before any residential development (with regard to SLO2 and SLO4).</li> </ul> <p><b>Request 1:</b> It is requested that c. 6.6ha of land at Burgage More, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lands are not in areas of flood risk as per Map No. 4 Flood Risk.</li> <li>▪ The submitters are aware of the report made by the biodiversity office for Wicklow but these lands cannot just be zoned natural open space if it is in any way possible for similar surveys of these lands to show that they can be used for sporting facilities.</li> <li>▪ The lands are owned by the ESB and so are state owned, with a greater chance of purchasing these lands.</li> <li>▪ The lands could be developed for multi-sport astro pitches/running track, soccer/rugby pitches, external/internal basketball courts, paddle courts, parking (for greenway and organised runs)</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p> 
227	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a> <a href="#">Ref 204711</a>	



**Zoning Request 1:****Request 2:**

It is requested that c. 6ha of lands at Haylands, zoned MU 'Mixed Use' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are raised:

- SLO4 highlights that the road from the N81 to Knockieran Bridge are to be development before residential areas, and this is supported.
- The lands could become a community hub with sports facilities, a community centre, playground, and parking.

**Draft LAP:****Zoning Request 2:**



## Chief Executive Response

### Request 1

In relation to Request 1, the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the OS2 'Natural Areas' zoning of the lands. These lands are situated in close proximity to the Poulaphouca SPA and are below the 194m contour, which is the area which is most linked to the protected site in terms of land form / topography, drainage and accessibility for fauna. The Draft Plan has been crafted with a view to zoning the **appropriate** area as OS2, as opposed to arbitrary buffer zones of 100m, 200m etc and this 194m contour line has been carefully evaluated to confirm that this is the appropriate limit in this area for any development zoning.

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. This assessment states:

*'Burgage Bay is an area of valuable shallow wetland habitat and one of the key areas within and surrounding the Plan area for wintering waterbirds such as Teal, Wigeon and Goldeneye. It is part of the Poulaphouca Special Protection Area, which is designated and afforded high levels of protection under the European Habitats Directive and transposing Regulations. The preparation of the Plan was informed by the fact that this area is susceptible to disturbance from human encroachment on the surrounding subject lands. Furthermore, lands in this area form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and a Local Biodiversity Area (a site of local biodiversity value that is not within designated areas).'*

*The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.'*

The requested AOS 'Active Open Space' zoning and any active sports use that could arise on foot of same, would require significant changes to the natural condition of these lands, including but not limited to, significant contour remodeling, removal of a significant area of existing woodland and extensive drainage, erection of structures and extensive hard surfaced area for car parking, flood lighting etc. Such development works would pose a high risk of creating significant adverse impacts on the integrity and conservation interests of the adjoining protected European Site and therefore cannot be recommended.

The CE would also have serious concerns in relation to access to the requested AOS lands, noting that the proposal includes car parking for c. 78 vehicles. The access along Burgage More is constrained, being single carriageway in places. Any widening of this road would involve the removal of significant lengths of hedgerows and mature trees. Map No. 5 Transport Strategy indicates the road in question as operating as a local street only, and the text of SLO7 states the following: *'Development within this SLO shall maintain the hedgerows and rural character of Burgage More lane to the west and provide an appropriate buffer to this lane for such purposes.'* It is not the view of the CE that this road should be significantly widened in the near future.

Furthermore, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the quantum of AOS lands within the draft plan. Issues have not been raised in relation to any shortcoming in the Social Infrastructure Audit, with the Draft Plan providing for an increase in the quantum of lands reserved for AOS in comparison to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

### Request 2

In relation to Request 2, the use of the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning objective in this location is to ensure flexibility to the location of the desired different uses within this block, having regard to the uncertain final route of the road objective through Doran's Pit.



The quantum of uses within this MU 'Mixed Use' zone is set out in text within SLO4 and the accompanying concept plan. Zoning for each individual requested use in this area is not recommended.

The increase in AOS zoning suggested would remove an area of OS2 'Natural Areas' lands in conflict with the recommendations of the Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. Furthermore, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit sets out the rationale for the quantum of AOS lands within the draft plan. Issues have not been raised in relation to any shortcoming in the Social Infrastructure Audit, with the Draft Plan providing for an increase in the quantum of lands reserved for AOS in comparison to the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019. On this basis, the above request is not recommended.

Please see additional assessment of this request detailed in **Section 5 SEA & AA** of this report, prepared by the Council's environmental / ecological expert consultants, which addresses any submission with potential to impact on the environment or European Sites. No amendments to the draft plan on foot of this request are recommended in that assessment.

On the basis of the above, the requested change is not recommended.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

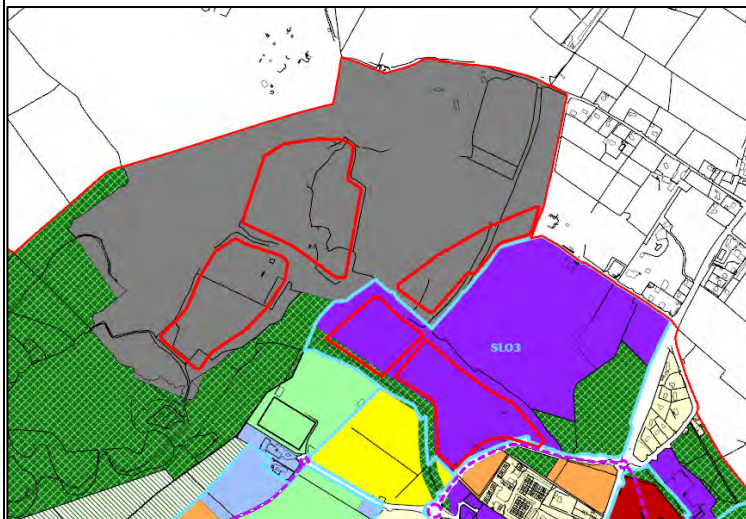
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



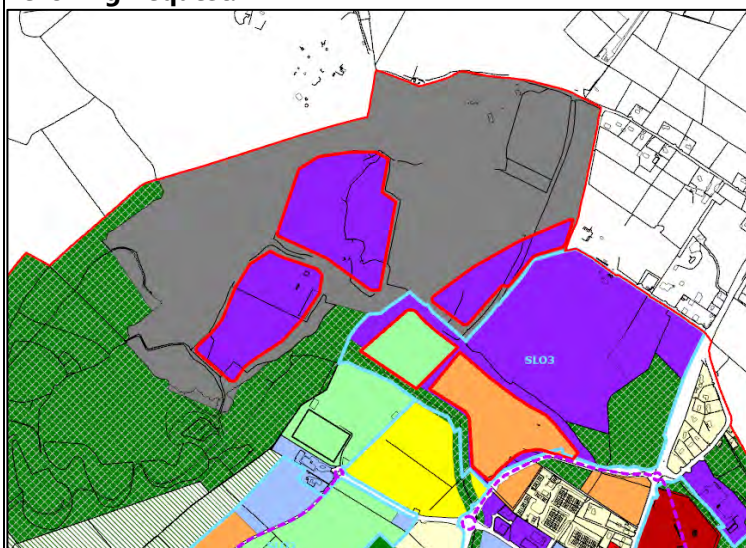
No.	Name	Issues Raised
208	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 153614</a>	<p><b>Request 1 Quarry lands wets of existing N81/SLO3</b></p> <p>It is requested that lands of c. 36.6ha at Deerpark, Dillonsdown, Blessington Demesne, and Newpaddocks, zoned EX 'Extractive Industry' (c. 24.8ha), E 'Employment' (c. 11.7ha) and OS2 'Natural Areas' (c. 0.2ha) in the Draft LAP, be zoned E 'Employment' (c. 24.8ha), RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' (c. 7.8ha), and AOS 'Active Open Space' (c. 3.98ha). In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The addition of employment land use zoning north of SLO3 corresponds to lands east of the proposed N81.</li> <li>▪ Sand and gravel extraction is virtually completed at the quarry located west of the proposed N81 and the area currently zoned EX 'Extractive Industry' is available for other beneficial use.</li> <li>▪ Rezoning land as requested in SLO3 would have the benefit of creating additional land for residential purposes together with an ancillary area of Active Open Space and facilities which would be complementary to an existing sporting/recreational hub.</li> <li>▪ It is acknowledged that additional residential areas would be RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2', this proposed residential area can be justified on the basis of site suitability and compatibility with other nearby residential areas, providing additional residential capacity in light of the recent increase in housing targets. This area within SLO3 can be considered on the basis that it can form part of wider integrated housing/community facility/open space scheme that will be well connected to the existing built-up area.</li> <li>▪ The additional AOS lands in SLO3 would balance the requested reduction in SLO4 (addressed in relation to SLO4 in <b>Section B.8.2 Specific Local Objectives</b>) and would also ensure that the delivery of AOS is not dependent on the development of a singular opportunity site.</li> <li>▪ Additional employment land is requested within the EX 'Extractive Industry' area, with the balance of the lands being considered strategic land for future development. The additional employment land would replace the employment land being removed by the proposed residential and active open space zoning requested for SLO3.</li> <li>▪ Given the strategic importance of Blessington in the context of employment provision, this area is ideally suited to further development for employment purposes. Land at this location can be re-graded as needed to provide for future development. There would be a net increase of 17.04ha of E 'Employment' lands.</li> </ul>



**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**



**Request 2 Doran's Pit SLO4**

It is requested that the **SLO4 Concept Plan** be omitted. In support of this change, the following grounds put forward:

- The concept plan shows the zoned area to the east of the new road as green space/undeveloped land which is wholly inconsistent with the zoning map, and is a vast area and unsuitable location for active open space/tourism/car parking with no indication of a viable end user for these facilities. This is inconsistent with CPO 11.53 of the WCDP, which states the following:  
*'Where projects for new tourism projects identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable development.'*
- The delivery of infrastructure at this location will depend on market conditions and development viability. Inconsistencies between the zoning map and this concept plan will lead to developer uncertainty.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The reservation of c.2.7ha for amenity car parking/other tourist infrastructure is also a completely unsustainable model for tourism given the traffic it would generate, and is inconsistent with the need to facilitate modal shift to sustainable transport options as per Chapter 12 of the WCDP and the Climate Action Plan 2024, and CPOs 11.33 and 11.51, which state the following: <i>'CPO 11.33 To encourage eco-tourism projects<sup>2</sup> or those tourism projects with a strong environmentally sustainable design and operational ethos.'</i> <i>'CPO 11.51 Ensure the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.'</i></li> <li>▪ The location is completely unsuited to creating safe and secure neighbourhoods with overlooking from surrounding uses, the required facilities should be integrated within the fabric of the urban extension as opposed to vast areas of car parking with poor design outcomes and adverse effects on the local biodiversity area. The location of open space/tourism facilities is at odds with the requirements of Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads which requires a strong sense of enclosure along roads/pedestrian streets.</li> <li>▪ The proposed link road through SLO4 may attract a significant amount of traffic, the placement of this tourism facility may also add further pressure to this road and have negative implications on the proposed residential development.</li> </ul> <p>It is further requested that the quantum of Active Open Space be reduced in SLO4, from 3.3ha to 2ha. [Note that Section 4.4 of the submission indicates that no land use zoning is requested in this area, only amendments to SLO requirements/concept plans]. In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is noted that pre-draft consultation indicated a considerable shortfall in the provision of active open space, and the lack of a football field for Blessington AFC is acknowledged.</li> <li>▪ No rational is provided for 3.3ha at this location.</li> <li>▪ 2ha is more than sufficient to provide for the average football pitch (0.714ha) and MUGA area.</li> <li>▪ A smaller area of Active Open Space will also facilitate development that is in keeping with the development of a compact urban extension.</li> <li>▪ A replacement area of active open space of 3.98ha as requested above on lands zoned EX 'Extractive Industry', a net increase of 2.68ha.</li> </ul>
--	--

#### Chief Executive Response

##### **Request 1 Quarry lands wets of existing N81/SLO3**

In relation to the requested additional area of land zoned for residential purposes in SLO3, 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).

On the basis of the above, it is not recommended to zone lands for residential use as requested.

In relation to the requests for additional E 'Employment' and AOS 'Active Open Space' zonings to the west of the existing N81, these zonings are largely compensatory to losses of such lands from the above rezoning/SLO requests, though in both cases there would be net increases in E 'Employment' and AOS 'Active Open Space' lands. As the above zoning requests are not recommended, the need for compensatory zonings is unnecessary.

Furthermore, the development of additional E 'Employment' and AOS 'Active Open Space' lands in a more peripheral location, as represented by the net increased area of both areas as requested, would be premature pending the development of undeveloped/brownfield lands within the landholding zoned for such purposes in the Draft LAP. On this basis, it is not recommended to rezone the lands as requested.

#### **Request 2 Doran's Pit SLO4**

In relation to the requested reduction in AOS 'Active Open Space' lands in SLO4, the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit clearly sets out the requirements for Active Open Space lands within the plan area. The submission has acknowledged the need for active open space facilities in Blessington, and has not raised issues in relation to any shortcomings/figures within the Social Infrastructure Audit. Attention is also directed to other submissions made to the Draft LAP which request and increase in the quantum of Active Open Space lands within the SLO (assessed separately). On this basis of the above, it is not recommended to reduce the quantum of land designated for Active Open Space use within SLO4. Issues in relation to layouts of Active Open Space within the SLO will be addressed below in response to the request for the omission of the SLO4 concept plan.

In relation to the request to omit the concept plan from SLO4, the CE is of the opinion that the concept plan is entirely consistent with the lands zoned MU 'Mixed Use', in that the uses permitted under the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning is expanded upon within the text of SLO4, and for which the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning was intended in determining the zoning of the lands in the Draft LAP. The purpose of the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning in this case was a practical concern in that the final route / design of the road objective is indicative only, and setting out precise zoning boundaries in relation to this road may not be appropriate/possible. The CE is amenable to amending the text of SLO4 to clarify the uses that are intended for development within the MU 'Mixed Use' zoned area.

In relation to the location of the car park, the traffic generated, and the need to promote modal shift, the CE does not agree that the location of such a car parking facility would promote car usage. Map No. 7 indicates objectives that may aid supporting the previously planned extension of the Blessington Greenway, with the map showing the reserved land as potentially operating as a greenway supporting car park.

While the recently proposed greenway extension project has been recently refused consent by An Bord Pleanála, the 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. In this regard, the development of a tourism related car park, in close proximity and with direct access via the new road to the Blessington Lakes is an objective that is essential to retain. SLO4 is the optimal location in Blessington and in the wider area for providing supporting infrastructure for the future development of the tourism and recreation sector associated with the lakes.

Blessington serves a wide rural catchment population. Considering the current level of service of public transport in Blessington, many visitors to the lakes area and other amenities asset in Blessington, as well residents of Blessington's rural catchment will likely use the private car in some part of their journey. The location of the



reserved land, and other locations intended for car parking as set out in BLESS48, is intended to facilitate modal shift to active travel in accessing the town centre, by diverting those entering the town from parking in the built-up area, allowing for road space reallocation and active travel infrastructure in central areas. Furthermore, any such facilities of large surface car parking could potentially be redeveloped in the future were the level of public transport service in Blessington to be significantly improved.

The provisions of the draft LAP, such as those relating to visitor centres, visitor car parking etc are recommended to be maintained in the plan, even in the absence of the current greenway project, as such facilities would support a wide range of tourism project and activities.

In relation to urban design consideration raised with regard to the concept plan, the description of SLO4 states the following: *'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 submission states that AOS/other facilities should be integrated into urban extensions as opposed to vast areas of car parking with poor design outcomes, lacking overlooking, at odds with the strong enclosure required by the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The text of SLO4 explicitly refers to providing a strong sense of enclosure, and the above vision for SLO4 explicitly states that it is intended that the predominantly residential part of the mixed use development be 'bounded' by the planned link street. To do so serves to provide a strong boundary and gateway function between the 'town proper' immediately adjacent to the town centre and the relatively open active open space/tourism/parking uses transitioning into OS2 lands and the settlement boundary/rural area. The layout in the concept plan also avoids a significant resident population having to cross the link street to access the town centre (with the possibility that residents may choose to drive), and avoids the link street being perceived as the 'centre' of the regenerated area over the central green area/plaza indicated in the concept plan. Passive surveillance can be provided to the eastern side of the link street by any tourism/accommodation/clubhouse structures, passing traffic on the active travel route, and by residences providing the strong enclosure to the western side of the street.

In relation to adverse impacts on the local biodiversity area, the text of SLO4 requires the development of appropriate buffer zones from site of biodiversity value.

On foot of the above, no changes are recommended to the concept plan of SLO4.

### Chief Executive's Recommendation

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. 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 developed ~~edment~~ 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 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 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 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.

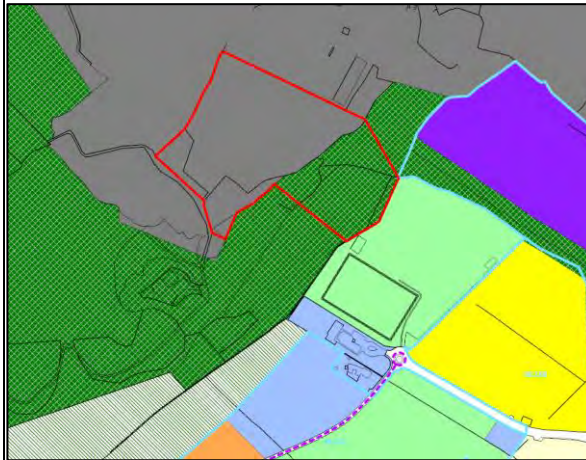


No.	Name	Issues Raised
214	<a href="#">Blessington GAA</a> <a href="#">Ref 180116</a>	<p>The following zoning changes are requested (two options presented):</p> <p><b>Option 1:</b> It is requested that c. 10ha of lands at Deerpark, zoned EX 'Extractive Industry' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space' and AG 'Agriculture' (with the provision of playing fields permitted in principle).</p> <p><b>Option 2:</b> It is requested that c. 6.9ha of lands at Deerpark, zoned EX 'Extractive Industries' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AG 'Agriculture' (with the provision of playing fields permitted in principle) and that a looped walkway objective be included in the plan.</p> <p>In support of these requests, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since 2007 (when the current grounds acquired), the population of Blessington has increased by 40% with further growth envisioned, with c. 1500 people within the 5-19 age cohort, with resultant demand for facilities. There is a membership of 800 people.</li> <li>▪ The existing housing units and population result in an average household size of c. 3 people, higher than the national average. Taking a reduced household size of 2.7 and the housing target, the plan provides for an additional 1,401 people, almost double the population target. Does not include population or zoned land in Co. Kildare, potential combined growth of 2,500 to 8,000 people. Now is the time to allocate sufficient lands.</li> <li>▪ The Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, in detailing projected demand, identifies Blessington GAA as 8.72ha. However, there is only 4ha of actually play space once car parking, storage, club facilities and circulation space has been factored in. 4ha of the allocated 18.5 ha comprises this car parking, etc.</li> <li>▪ 14.9ha within SLO2 is welcomed however is in a single ownership and will be difficult to delivery with limited housing provision on these lands.</li> <li>▪ The above suggests significant shortfall in AOS 'Active Open Space' provisions.</li> <li>▪ The GAA grounds are constrained with regard to expansion considering adjacent land uses/zonings. The natural option is north-west into quarry lands, where quarrying has long ceased and is now in agricultural use.</li> <li>▪ The N81 corridor is noted and access could be facilitated in detail design.</li> <li>▪ Option 1: Proposed removal of 19,000sqm bank/planting, provision of 766m x 2m wide perimeter planting, resulting in a deficit of 17,500sqm of planting.</li> <li>▪ Option 2: looped walk connecting recent Glen Ding walk to GAA grounds, existing parking could be used by walkers. Semi-permeable access for emergency vehicles to agricultural lands, sensitive designed as part of looped walkway with tree loss compensated with new boundary planting. Removal of 640sqm planting, provision 1532sqm planting, resulting in an increase of 892sq.m planting.</li> </ul> <p>Suggested new objective for Option 2: <i>'To facilitate playing fields including the provision of 2m deep perimeter planting providing an ecological corridor to the adjoining stream – a new Connected Looped walkway extending the Glen Ding Greenway shall be provided as part of the provision of any new playing fields.'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reference made to Cabinteely GAA and Ticknock Park as examples of the</li> </ul>

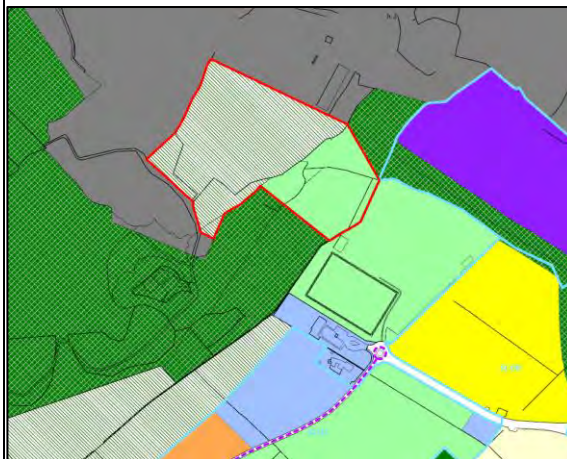


sustainable provision of active open space with a sensitively designed connecting walkway through forestry.

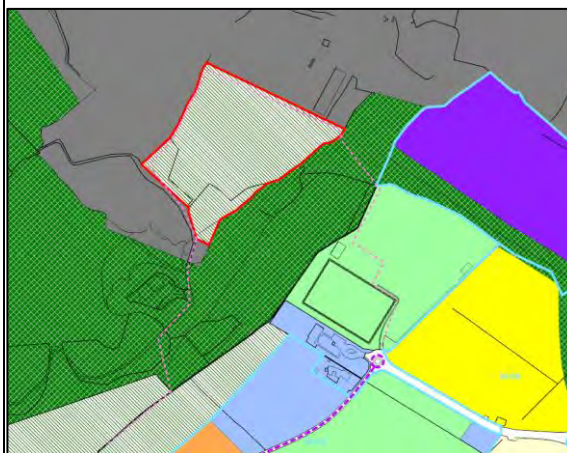
**Draft LAP:**



**Option 1 Rezoning Request:**



**Option 2 Rezoning Request:**





### **Chief Executive Response**

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). 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.

### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 172755</a>	<p>This is a lengthy submission, which is difficult to summarise succinctly without omissions and the interested reader is therefore directed to the full submission (hyperlink to left)</p> <p>This submission raising the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cairn Homes has an extensive land holding in Blessington zoned for a range of uses under previous LAO</li> <li>▪ The primary concern with the draft plan is that it de-zones or down-zones significant areas of residential lands as a result of using out of dated and inaccurate data, reducing the area of new residential land by 38ha (67%), equivalent to 1,508 homes/4,072 people.</li> <li>▪ The LAP's proposed re-prioritisation of zoned land and rezoning to non-residential uses will actually compound the difficulties in the delivery of housing. Priority 1 and Priority 2 residential zonings in the Draft LAP should be more flexible and support early delivery in accordance with need.</li> <li>▪ The phasing of infrastructure delivery must be feasible and connected to development delivery. It is largely based on private sector investment, yet there is no policy connection that appreciates that without development the infrastructure will not be realised.</li> <li>▪ The draft LAP needs to be recognise that Blessington Demesne is an integral part of the town and the park is a significant public amenity which is a major attraction for living and working in the town. At a strategic level the draft LAP is too focused on Main Street and adjoining plots. SLO8 - Blessington Demesne (East) is fundamental to delivery of the BIRR and Town Park. The draft LAP should champion the lands' early delivery to unlock these key public assets.</li> <li>▪ The draft LAP seeks to zone Cairn's lands in SLO2 for Active Open Space. This is entirely unfeasible as presented and can only be implemented with development to support the significant investment required.. The allocation of AOS has been grossly miscalculated based on flawed analysis for the town.</li> <li>▪ The submission includes extensive masterplan documentation, which highlights the urban design opportunity to provide a vision of an urban edge to the Parklands and improved recreational amenity for the town, shown with a running track, sports pitches, and allotments.</li> <li>▪ The change to OS2 'Natural Areas' of lands at Newpaddocks is warranted in the interest of local biodiversity and amenity, but lands zoned RN2 should be zoned 'Priority 1' RN1 Residential (Ref. Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives).</li> <li>▪ Opportunity Sites 1 Blessington Town Centre should be simplified so as not to add additional conditions or onerous obligations that would undermine feasibility (i.e. commercial ground floor use).</li> </ul> <p>As part of this overall submission, the following requests are made:</p> <p><b>Request 1:</b> It is requested that lands of c. 9.5ha at Blessington Demesne, zoned AOS 'Active Open Space' in the Draft LAP, and c. 1ha at Newpaddocks, zoned RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1'.</p>



**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**



**Request 2:** It is further requested that the below text of Section B.2 be amended, as follows:

In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned residential 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 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 where~~ the following conditions are satisfied:

- ~~75%~~ 50% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained ~~and development initiated~~ or it is demonstrated that RN1 sites cannot not be implemented in the short term as Priority 1 and should be assessed as Priority 2 lands;
- 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 and that the RN2 lands will deliver residential output in lieu of non-delivery of Priority 1 lands.



**Request 3:** It is further requested that objective BLESS7 be amended 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 where~~ the following conditions are satisfied:

- Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained ~~and development initiated~~ or it is demonstrated that RN1 sites cannot be implemented in the short term as Priority 1 and should be assessed as Priority 2 lands);
- 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 and that the RN2 lands will deliver residential output in lieu of non-delivery of Priority 1 lands.

**Request 4:** It is further requested that the below text from Section B.2 is amended as follows:

It is an aim of this plan to focus 30% of new residential development into the serviced existing built envelope of the settlement.

**Request 5:** It is requested that the below text of Section B.8, in relation to phasing, be amended as follows:

In order to ensure a long term supply of zoned residential 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 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 where~~ the following conditions are satisfied:

- ~~75%~~ 50% of Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained ~~and development initiated~~ or it is demonstrated that RN1 sites cannot not be implemented in the short term as Priority 1 and should be assessed as Priority 2 lands;
- 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 and that the RN2 lands will deliver residential output in lieu of non-delivery of Priority 1 lands.

~~Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened, for example, where a barrier to development is involved.~~ Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in any planning application proposal.

**Request 6:** It is requested that the below text of SLO8 be omitted:

~~Permission for additional residential development within this SLO will not be considered unless this town park will be completed and available for use, in full, upon the occupation of the 1st house.~~

**Request 7:** It is accepted that the zoning of lands at Newpaddocks as OS2 'Natural Areas' is warranted in the interest of local biodiversity and amenity, however it is further submitted that these lands may serve as public open space,



	<p>for the adjoining lands, allowing public access, pathways, or indeed road access through the site.</p> <p><b>Request 8:</b> It is requested that the Objectives for BLESS OP1-3 be amended to omit the following text:  <del>Subject to the provision of adequate active uses to all frontages.</del></p> <p><b>Request 9:</b> It is requested that the objective of the RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' zoning be amended as follows:</p> <p>To provide for new residential development and supporting facilities where it can be demonstrated that such development would accord with the Core Strategy housing target for that settlement after the activation of 50% of Priority 1 lands or it is demonstrated that RN1 sites cannot be implemented in the short term as Priority 1 and should be assessed as Priority 2.</p> <p><b>Request 10:</b> It is requested that objective BLESS27 be amended as follows:</p> <p>BLESS27 To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multi-purpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular, - To require the delivery of significant appropriate 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.</p> <p><b>Request 11:</b> It is requested that the Section A.3.1 of the LAP acknowledge that Blessington Demesne was set out in accordance with a previous masterplan (2001), and is appropriately conceived as a neighbourhood rather than 'peripheral development beyond'</p>
--	---

#### Chief Executive Response

In relation to **Request 1**, 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 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 CE rejects the assertion that the inclusion of the population of Blessington within Co. Kildare is a 'crass calculation' to bring Blessington over the threshold of Level 2 of the Community Facility Hierarchy Model. The issue of the population, existing and targeted, within Co. Kildare is one raised at pre-draft stage and frequently is raised at public consultation meetings.

On this basis, the requested rezoning is not recommended.



In relation to **Requests 2,3,5 and 9**, it is clear from the Proposed Variation and draft LAP text that residential zoning provisions in the new set of LAPs will provide for additional provision i.e. a quantum of residential zoning over and above what we be needed to meet current County Development Plan targets, in order to future proof the LAPs in the event that the Core Strategy is amended and targets are increased.

In the preparation of LAPs, cognisance has and will be taken of the 2022 Development Plan Guidelines, in particular the following provisions:

*"It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that zoned housing land in an existing development plan, that is serviced and can be developed for housing within the life of the new development plan under preparation, should not be subject to de-zoning.*

*Should it be the case that there is a surplus of well-located zoned and fully serviced land to meet population and housing supply targets already zoned for development in any local authority area when reviewing a development plan, it is recommended best practice that a phased approach be taken to prioritise the preferred sequence of development of such sites. However, phasing should be applied where there is a sound planning rationale for doing so, based on factors such as site location, the availability or proximity of, or capacity to provide, off-site services, facilities or infrastructure. This should also be viewed in the context of the urgent need to increase housing supply."*

On this basis, the requested amendments are not recommended.

In relation to **Request 4**, it is considered that the delivery of infill development can be hard to predict such that a quantitative percentage is not warranted in Section B.2

In relation to **Request 6**, it is considered that the text is entirely appropriate and will not hinder the granting of permissions with conditions requiring such. On this basis, the requested amendment is not recommended.

In relation to **Request 7**, the uses appropriate are as follows: *'Uses appropriate for natural areas (OS2) zoned land are uses that protect and enhance the function of these areas as flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity. The development of these lands for recreational uses may only be considered where such use is shown to not undermine the purpose of this zoning.'* While limited trails may be considered, it is not considered appropriate that the lands be used as public open space.

In relation to **Request 8**, OP1 is located in the very core of the settlement and it a vital bridging site between the Market Square and modern mixed use (shopping / community) development and school further west. It is desired that a significant 'landmark' type development be progressed in this space, which attracts people and activity into this area, so that an inactive, unsupervised area does not continue to persist in this central area between two active commercial zones.

In this regard therefore it is deemed that active frontages are essential on this site, especially given that this site has frontage onto existing streets and developments that are suffering from inactivity and are in urgent need of revitalisation; therefore it is considered that this objective should be retained. It should be noted however that the plan does not specify that 'active frontages' cannot comprise residential use or must comprise commercial / community use.

The objectives for OP1 do not specify a certain quantum of commercial or mixed use in OP1 but given the town centre location and the objectives of the CDP and LAP, non-residential uses (e.g. commercial, retail, tourism, community etc) will be an expected significant component of any such development, particularly at ground floors. Therefore no changes are recommended to the text in this regard.

In relation to **Request 10**, as Request 1 above has not been recommended, it is considered that the wording of


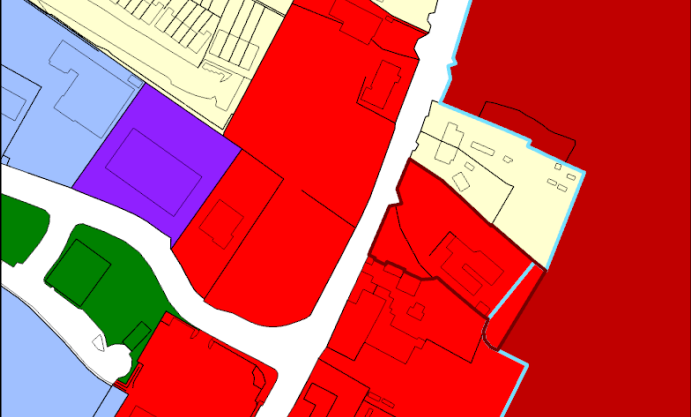


<p>objective BLESS27 is appropriate, considering the quantum of AOS lands zoned in these areas.</p> <p>In relation to Request 11, the CE is of the opinion that no negative connation or viewpoint is put forward in Section A.3.1. The description of 'peripheral development beyond' is an outcome of the previous masterplan not being fully implemented, and does not infer that any development that had taken place was poorly designed on inappropriate.</p>
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



No.	Name	Issues Raised
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	This submission is a duplicate of Submission No. 208 above.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
This submission is assessed under Submission No. 208 above.		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
As per Submission No. 208 above.		



No.	Name	Issues Raised
252	<a href="#">Lidl Ireland GmbH</a> <a href="#">Ref 114350</a>	<p>It is requested that lands of c. 0.3ha, zoned RE 'Existing Residential' and MU 'Mixed Use' in the Draft Plan, be zoned TC 'Town Centre'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Draft LAP proposes to preserve the pre-existing zoning, and includes the subject lands in opportunity site OP8.</li> <li>▪ The zoning pattern is less than optimal for the future development of the subject lands, with both the existing residential and mixed use areas being subsidiary in area and function to the primary town centre element.</li> <li>▪ The additional area to be zoned town centre is 0.4ha, and TC 'Town Centre' lands have been omitted elsewhere in the draft LAP (e.g. lands to the north of the existing Dunnes stores site), reducing the town centre footprint.</li> <li>▪ The TC 'Town Centre' zoning extends further north (by c.120m) opposite the subject site, up to and including Blessington Tyre Centre, creating an imbalance in this regard.</li> <li>▪ Haylands House has been acquired and assembled within the overall subject lands. The TC 'Town Centre' zoning should be extended to reflect the subject lands potential and to encourage the redevelopment of the Haylands House element. The existing residence on the site represents a low intensity form of development and does not contribute to the creation of streetscape at the gateway to the town.</li> <li>▪ Preservation of the existing character should not be encouraged while also including the lands in OP8 indicating that the lands should be redeveloped.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP (Site outlined in dark brown):</b></p>  <p><b>Rezoning Request (Site outlined in dark brown):</b></p> 



It is further requested that the opportunity site designation for the subject lands, OP8, be amended to reflect an extended TC 'Town Centre' zone, and be split in two to facilitate staged development of the overall Haylands landbank, as follows:

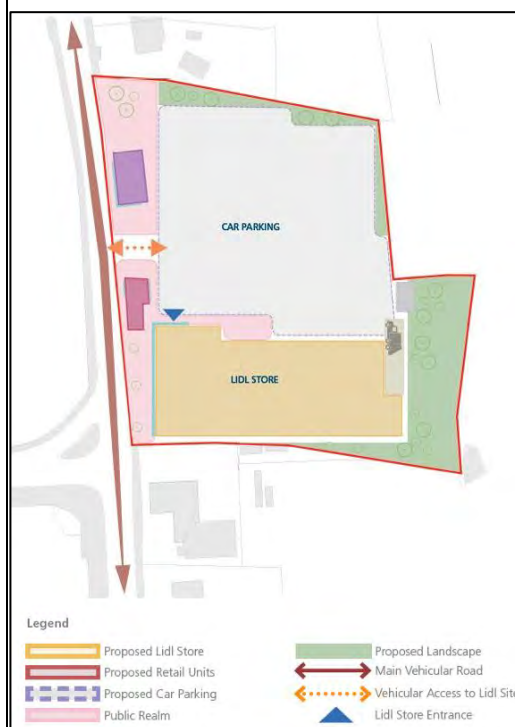
#### BLESS OP8 East of Main Street (North)

This site is comprised of a combination of a 20th century suburban dwelling with a commercial complex of outbuildings and older vernacular building north of the Maxol service station on Blessington Main Street / N81. The lands have been assembled in single ownership and are currently in vacant possession pending redevelopment proposals being brought forward.

The primary focus of redevelopment for this opportunity site should be to provide town centre activities, specifically retail (with associated ancillary elements where feasible), to improve the activity and visual appearance of the area, and contribute to Blessington town centre fulfilling its strategic role and function as an important service centre in the region.

#### Objectives BLESS OP8 East of Main Street (North)

- To provide for town centre infill development. Indicative block formats are provided in the below concept plan including potential for a Foodstore Supermarket floor plate.
- Redevelopment of this site should have a degree of regard to vernacular features that are present and consider an element of incorporation or interpretation in any proposed scheme.
- New buildings along the western boundary should also providing strong urban and active frontages to Blessington Main Street.
- Redevelopment of this site should consolidate the multiplicity of existing access points to Main Street and have regard to the Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme.





		<p>In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The OP site inadvertently ties a large landbank to a singular phase of regeneration.</li> <li>▪ The approach of the OP includes desire lines east (non-vehicular) and south, a multiplicity of roads/streets, preservation of existing vernacular buildings, public open space, and a function link to the landbank to the south. This approach could materially undermine its developability for a foodstore, and for substantive development of most forms.</li> <li>▪ It appears that the Draft LAP renders the available subject lands as somewhat sacrificial to the unavailable southern extents of the opportunity site, which is not appropriate or proportionate. The subject lands should be able to contribute positively to the provision of development and services needed in the town. The assembly of the current extents into a single opportunity site is typically not something that can be realistically mirrored in terms of actual site assembly.</li> <li>▪ The subject lands are the assembly of two parcels, the addition of 5 No. additional parcels is not considered to be reasonably likely.</li> <li>▪ Presenting OP 8 as a heavily integrated development concept, that lacks any particular modular or phased approach, including significant ancillary/infrastructure elements, will likely stymie the realization of town centre regeneration.</li> <li>▪ Difficulties anticipated include: incremental/modular development is prevented/frustrated; highly aspirational in nature; the potential for redevelopment is only as strong as the weakest link; primary focus (high intensity residential and mixed use development) contrary to the underlying TC 'Town Centre' zoning objective; pedestrian/cyclist permeability to Doran's Pit only feasible to southern portion due to topography changes to north; balancing massing of vernacular buildings with strong urban and active frontages; and that there is no real north-south desire line, with the existing main street providing this axis, hence the inclusion of a north-south within the block further fragments potential development blocks.</li> <li>▪ The majority of OP sites in the Draft LAP are aspirational and complicated in nature. Lidl Ireland GmbH is not in a position to take on the role of large scale property developer as would be required to deliver the same. Lidl have been seeking to secure lands in Blessington for over 20 years to date, with the evolution of food shopping in Blessington being relatively stagnant. In this context the subject lands are the only suitable, available, viable location.</li> <li>▪ The Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 set out policy in relation to the location of retail development and the use of the sequential approach test, which is pertinent in relation to overlapping TC 'Town Centre' zones and Core Retail Areas.</li> </ul>
--	--	---

#### Chief Executive Response

##### Request 1:

Noting the extent of the TC 'Town Centre' zoning on the opposite side of the N81 from the subject lands, the CE is not opposed to the rezoning request to extend the TC 'Town Centre' zoning to include the entire landholding. Furthermore, considering the relatively small residual RE 'Existing Residential' zoning to the north of the subject landholding, with MU 'Mixed Use' lands on two sides and with TC 'Town Centre' lands opposite, it would be appropriate to extend the TC 'Town Centre' zone further north.



On the basis of the above, it is recommended to zone the subject lands, and the immediately adjacent RE 'Existing Residential' lands to the north, as TC 'Town Centre'.

## **Request 2:**

In relation to OP8, the CE rejects the assertion that the inclusion of the subject lands within opportunity site OP8 ties a large landbank to a singular phase of regeneration, and that the northern lands are 'sacrificial' to the southern lands. Individual development sites within an opportunity site may be developed, as long as the development objectives of the overall opportunity site are delivered where relevant, or are not rendered unachievable by later stages of regeneration as part of such development. In order to allay concerns however the CE recommends that the 'Concept Plan' for OP8 be omitted.

The Chief Executive is amenable to the inclusion of text to clarify the matter of incremental development in relation to opportunity sites.

In relation to the apparent conflict between the TC 'Town Centre' zoning and the description of OP8 including 'high intensity residential and mixed use development', attention is directed to CPO 5.3 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, which states (in part) the following:

*'Other than in the retail core area, residential development shall be the primary development objective for lands zoned town centre or village centre. This shall not preclude commercial development on lands zoned town centre or village centre when suitable sites are not available in the core retail area.'* As such, the description of the primary focus of redevelopment for OP8 is consistent with the TC 'Town Centre' zoning.

In relation to the issue of the opportunity site potentially undermining the developability of the subject lands for a foodstore, the Chief Executive notes that the subject lands remain outside the Blessington Core Retail Area as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, in which an application for a foodstore may be subject to a retail impact assessment. Furthermore, block formats as included in **concept plans are indicative only**, whereby the overall objectives of OP8 may still be achievable with alternative layouts that may facilitate such a development. In relation to the recommended concept plan as included in the submission, attention is drawn to CPOs 5.3, 5.4, 5.17 and 5.21 of the Wicklow County Development Plan, which state the following:

*'5.3 To particularly promote and facilitate residential development in town and villages centres:*

- *Promote the 'active' use of above ground floor levels, and in particular to promote the concept of 'living over the shop' in centres. Where a 'living over the shop' use is proposed, a relaxation in density, car parking and open space standards will be considered, where the development meets very high quality of design and accommodation.*
- *[...]*

*5.4 To limit the concentration or clustering of uses that have bland inactive frontages and that fail to interact with the streetscape including car parks, blank shop frontages and ground floor offices. Such uses undermine the vitality of the town or village centre.*

*5.17 To harness and integrate the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive reuse, recognising its important contribution to placemaking. New development should respect and complement the historic fabric of existing towns and villages – the traditional street patterns, plot sizes, mix of building types, distinctive paving and attractive street furniture.*

*5.21 To strengthen the urban structure of towns and villages by ensuring that any new development contributes to a coherent urban form, focused on a high quality built environment of distinct character. New development shall incorporate a legible and permeable urban form that protects and complements the character of the street or area in which it is set in terms of proportion, enclosure, building line, design and by the marrying of new modern architecture with historic structures.'*



The submitted concept plan, with a large area of surface car parking and a single-use large structure dominating the subject lands, may not accord with the above objectives.

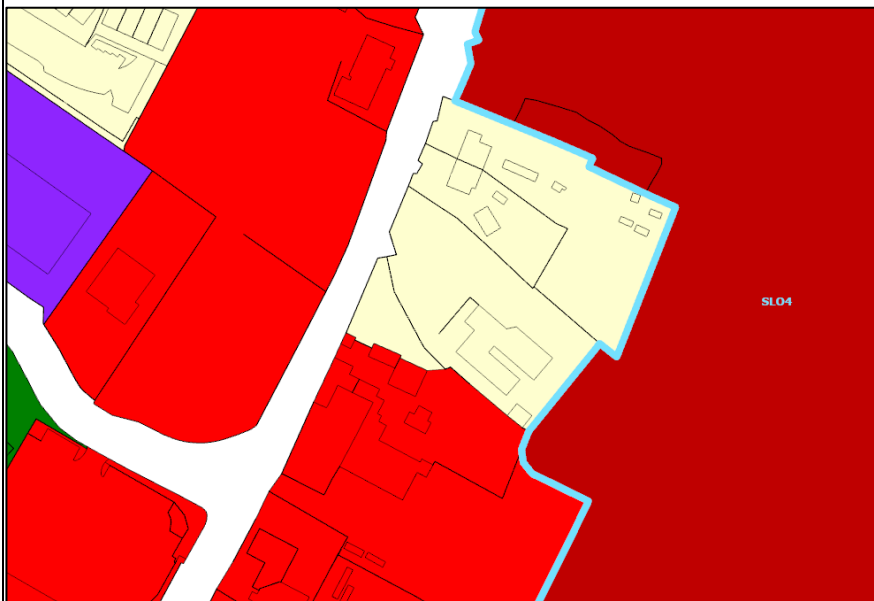
On foot of the above, it is not recommended to split/amend OP8. It is recommended to amend the text in relation to opportunity sites as set out below.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

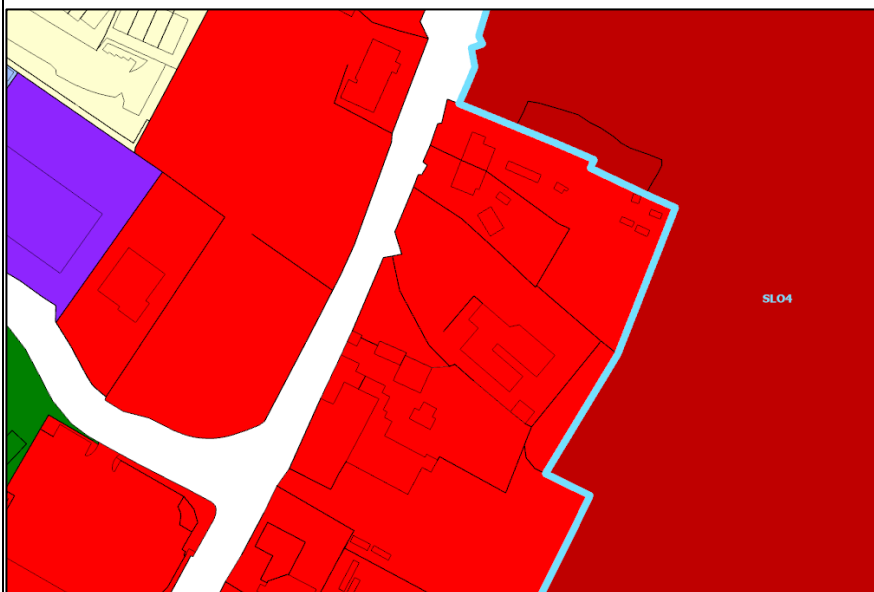
##### **Amend the plan as follows:**

4. Amend Map No.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives (and any changes consequent) as follows:

##### **Draft LAP:**



##### **Recommended Amendment (including Amended SLO4 boundary):**





5. Amend Section B.1 of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 Written Statement as follows:

**Blessington 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.

'For a number of the OPs / SLOs concept sketches are shown in this plan. These are conceptual only, did not include complete site surveys/analysis, and should not be taken as a definitive guide as to the acceptability or otherwise of any access points, road layouts or building positions/designs. Any application for permission on said lands must conform to all standards and requirements of the Planning Authority, as set out in this plan and the Wicklow County Development Plan'.

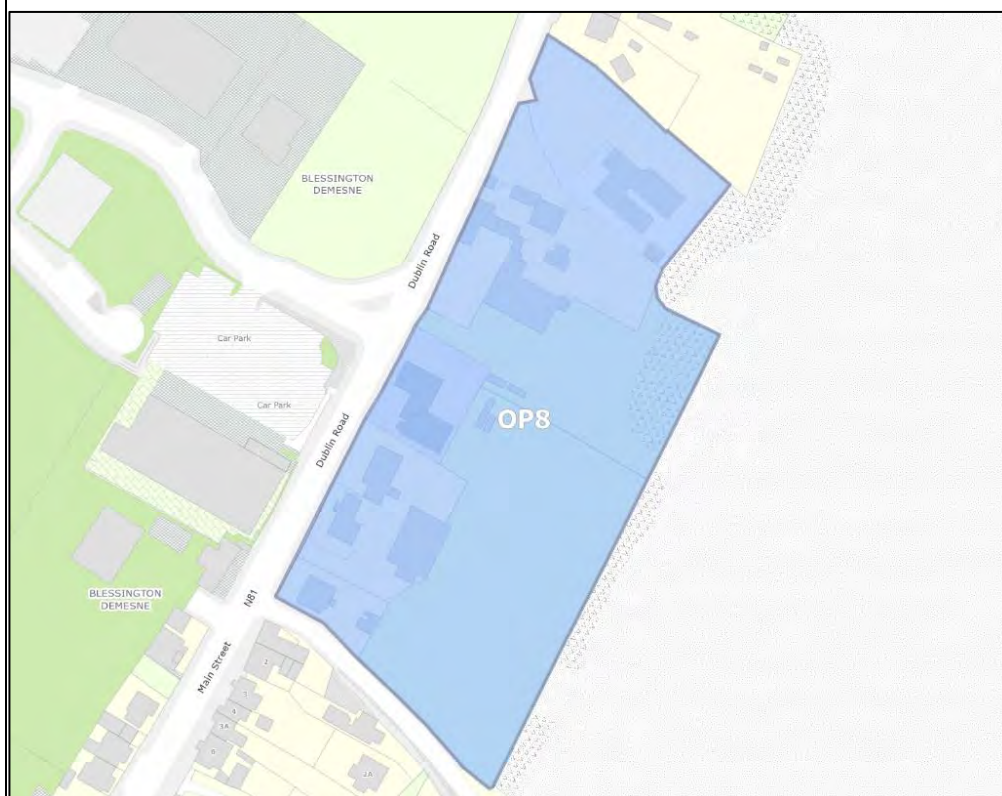
6. Amend OP8 as follows:

**Omit** OP8 'Concept Plan' Figure B1.11

&

Amend OP8 Boundary as follows:

**Change from:**





Change to:





## B.8.2: Specific Local Objectives

### Specific Local Objective 1 – Lands at Naas Road.

No.	Name	Issues Raised
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	Submitter objects to land in this area being zoned residential given there is a flood risk associated in the future with SLO1.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>The land use zoning provisions of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 have undergone a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which accompanies the draft plan. Consultation with the Office of Public Works has been undertaken with respect to the usage of the 'future scenario flood mapping' data. SFRA is carried out on the basis of the <b>current</b> flood zones; however additional measures have been included in the draft LAP with respect to any future risk of flooding.</p> <p>Objective BLESS51 states the following, noting the referencing of future scenario flood mapping:</p> <p><i>'Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>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;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>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;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Where 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 Guidelines.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Where flood zone mapping <b>does not indicate a risk of flooding</b> 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.'</i></p> <p>Furthermore, the text of SLO1 states the following:</p> <p><i>'In the previous Blessington Local Area Plan 2013, lands within this SLO were zoned for Active Open Space uses. However, future scenario flood mapping undertaken under the CFRAM programme indicates significant areas of potential flood risk in this area. While Active Open Space may be permissible under the current flood zones set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan, other locations within the settlement not subject to flood risk are preferable for such uses.'</i></p> <p>On this basis, regard has been had to the relevant future scenario flood mapping.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		
<p>Note that an amendment is otherwise recommended to Objective 51 on foot of a submission from the Office of Public Works. Refer to <b>Section 2 Chief Executive Recommended Amendments</b> of this report.</p>		



## Specific Local Objective 2 – Blessington Demesne (West)

No.	Name	Issues Raised
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	Great to see active open space under SLO2, close to town center, instead of building new houses and apartment everywhere (especially if there is plenty of space not too far away).
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	With regards to your active travel map, it is proposed to put car parking in one of the very few active open spaces proposed (map code SL02 refers). Submitter objects to this on the grounds that there is insufficient active open space detailed as it stands. Using some of it for car parking is not acceptable.
120	<a href="#">Niamh Brophy</a> <a href="#">Ref 082217</a>	<p>Suggests amendment of the text of SLO2 as follows:</p> <p><i>'The development of sports facilities, including a 400m athletics track and ancillary facilities on lands zoned Active Open Space, as agreed with the Planning Authority. The active open space should be suitable for the needs of, and shared use by, potential future educational uses on the site reserved for such within this SLO. 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. Permission for residential development will not be considered unless this sport ground will be completed and available for use upon the occupation of the 1st house'</i></p> <p>Rationale – provides clear expectation to a future design team of the requirement to incorporate an athletics track into the AOS zoned lands at SLO 2. Celbridge Athletics track is a good comparison for Blessington. A c2.4ha facility as part of the 14.9ha zoned AOS under SLO2.</p> <p>Also suggests amending the description of the AOS zoning to include direct reference to athletics facilities as a subset of sports grounds, as follows:</p> <p><i>'Subject to the protection and enhancement of natural biodiversity, to facilitate the further development and improvement of existing active open spaces, formal exercise areas, sports grounds (including athletics facilities), playing pitches, courts and other games areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality active recreational areas.</i></p> <p>Rationale – provide clarity that athletics facilities are considered as part of the sports grounds land use.</p>
127	<a href="#">Blessington and District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	The Forum is in full agreement with SLO2 & SLO4 that sports facilities should be completed first before any residential development. Neither of these currently zoned AOS lands gives any opportunity to the local clubs of the town to purchase and developed their own amenities.
205	<a href="#">Serpents Basketball Academy</a> <a href="#">Blessington</a> <a href="#">Ref 163620</a>	<p>Regarding the SLO2 &amp; SLO4 in the written statement, submitters would agree that the sports facilities should be developed first before any residential development. Ask for these objectives to remain in the LAP.</p> <p>The town needs various infrastructures to be completed with sporting facilities being a high importance area as they have not been developed over the last 11 to 12 years. This can only be attained with the current SLO2 &amp; SLO4 to remain within the LAP &amp; the written statement.</p>

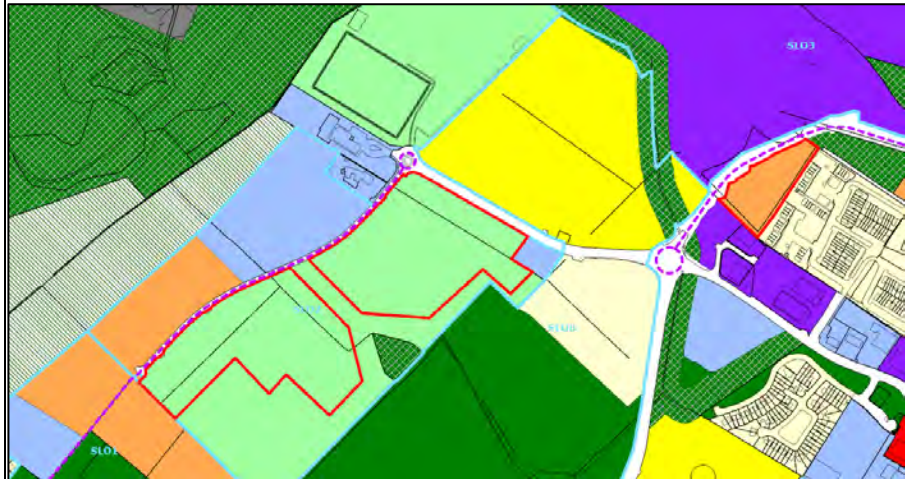


219

[Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.](#)  
[Ref 172755](#)

**Request 1:** It is requested that lands of c. 9.5ha at Blessington Demesne, zoned AOS 'Active Open Space' in the Draft LAP, and c. 1ha at Newpaddocks, zoned RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' in the Draft LAP, be zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1'.

**Draft LAP:**



**Rezoning Request:**



**Request 2:** It is requested that objective BLESS27 be amended as follows:

**BLESS27** To facilitate and encourage the delivery of new open spaces, parks and multi-purpose sport uses close to the built-up area of Blessington, including covered spaces. In particular, - To require the delivery of **significant appropriate** 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.

The submission states that the draft LAP completely overestimates the demand for AOS Active Open Space based on flawed analysis in the Social Infrastructure Assessment. Conversely the draft LAP needs to provide additional residential lands to address strategic needs in Wicklow and the Eastern Region generally.

The submission includes a masterplan for the overall landholding (including



		SLO2) which includes <i>'Balance of the Town Park including active open space and athletics track (the latter contingent on the change of zoning to residential in SLO2).'</i>
227	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a> <a href="#">Ref 204711</a>	Regarding the SLO2 & SLO4 in the written statement, submitters would agree that the sports facilities should be developed first before any residential development. We ask for these objectives to remain in the LAP. The town needs various infrastructures to be completed with sporting facilities being a high importance area as they have not been developed over the last 11 to 12 years. This can only be attained with the current SLO2 & SLO4 to remain within the LAP & the written statement.

#### Chief Executive Response

Submission No. 5, 205, and 227 are noted.

In response to issues in relation to the quantum of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands within SLO2, it is recognised that some submissions request a reduction in AOS lands, while others support maintaining these AOS lands. The CE is satisfied that the provision of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands within the Draft LAP is adequate and has been informed by the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, with no change recommended.

In response to requested for additional RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1', 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 AOS 'Active Open Space' zoned lands, as discussed above.

In response to issues of the lack of opportunities for clubs to purchase and develop their own amenities, the provision of AOS lands is as per the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit. Land ownership and the acquisition/transfer of property is not within the remit of a local area plan. The role of land use plan is to put in place a framework within which development can occur, but does not decide what works actually get done by either private individuals or public bodies. The delivery of objectives will be determined by the initiation of private development or by the allocation of public funding through the annual budgetary process, which is a separate process to any land use plan. Furthermore, the local area plan has no role in dictating or directing the delivery of private lands to particular sports clubs.

In response to the issue of additional car parking on AOS lands, the text of SLO2 states the following:

*'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.'*

It is intended that car parking developed in this area be of a level to serve any sports facility developed (as would usually be the case in the development of any such facility) plus an additional level of car parking to serve as an alternative car park for access to Glen Ding. Considering the small number of car parking spaces currently available at the entrance to Glen Ding on the Naas Road, a comparably small number of additional spaces are



intended to be required.

The Chief Executive is amenable to amending the text to clarify the level of additional parking required.

In relation to the exact use and configuration of future sports facilities to be developed in SLO2, at this time, prior to the completion of the forthcoming new **Wicklow County Outdoor Recreation Plan** (public consultation commencing Feb 2025) and the **County Wicklow Local Sports Plan** that is being developed during the course of 2025 it is considered it would be premature to determine a fixed use / users in the LAP. The draft plan zones land for active open space use, with the exact configuration to be determined in agreement with the planning authority at development management/planning application stage.

In 2025, as part of the National Sports Policy, the Wicklow County Council will be developing a Local Sports Plan for the County, which will identify infrastructure needs as well as a project delivery programme for new facilities. All of the submissions made with respect to sports infrastructure to this LAP will be considered in the preparation of the Local Sports Plan.

Note that issues in relation to Submission No. 127, 219, 205, 227 have also been assessed in **Part B.8 Zoning, Part B.5 Community Development** and **Appendix 3 Social Infrastructure Audit** as relevant.


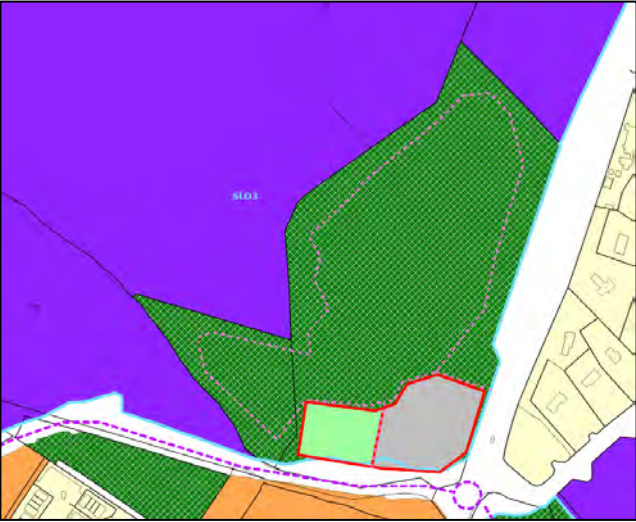
#### Chief Executive's Recommendation

##### **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.**



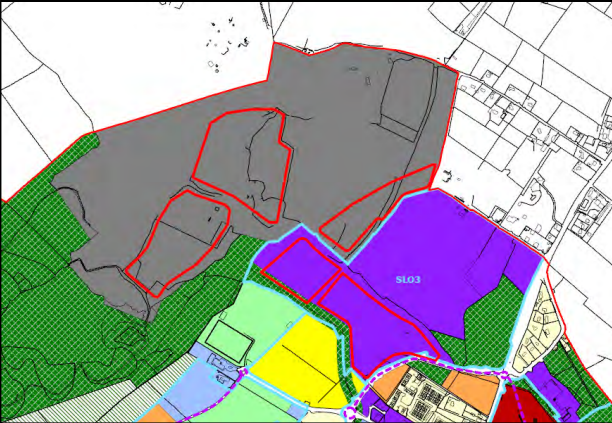
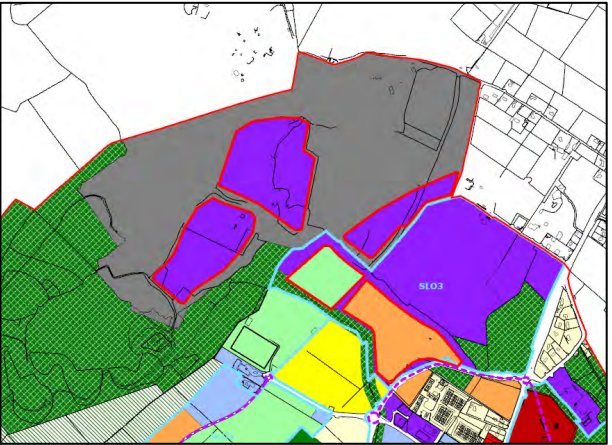
### Specific Local Objective 3 – Quarry Employment Lands

No.	Name	Issues Raised
127	<a href="#">Blessington and District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 0.9ha of lands at Santryhill, zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned for a Park &amp; Ride (c. 0.6ha) and a playground (c. 0.3ha) [The exact requested zonings are unclear, however the most appropriate to suit the requested uses would be PU 'Public Utility' and AOS 'Active Open Space']. A possible 1km forest trail is also indicated. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Park &amp; Ride for Blessington should be located to the north of the town purely from a cost point of view. If the LUAS/other infrastructure goes ahead in the future, it would not be built through or around the town, locating the P&amp;R on the Dublin side will aid the feasibility of such projects, and could also be used for commuters using express buses.</li> <li>▪ Playground area has residential zoned land to the south.</li> <li>▪ Removal of a small section of biodiversity area for Park &amp; Ride to be exchanged to adjacent lands.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Zoning Request (incl. suggested active travel route):</b></p> 



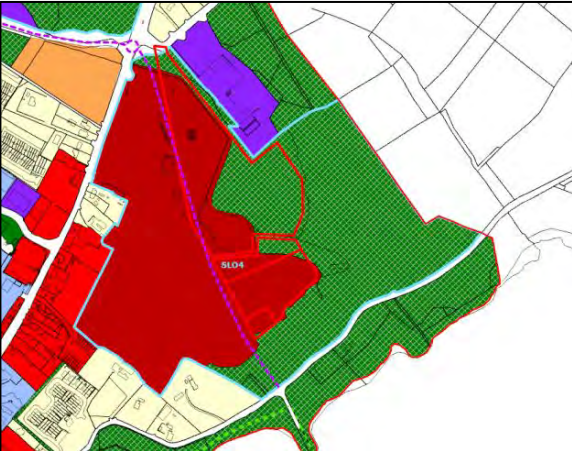
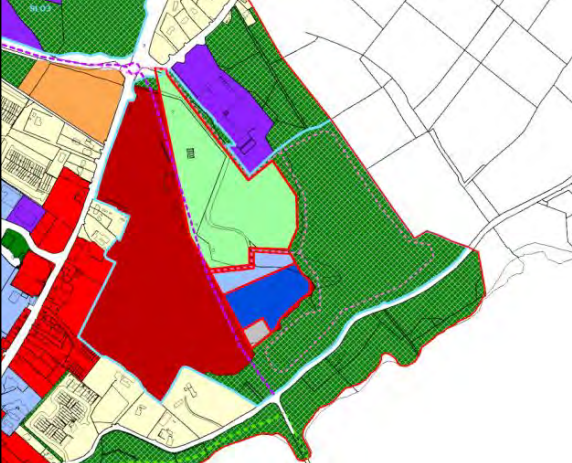
		<p>It is further requested that, with the amount of infrastructure projects that can be completed on these lands [referring to both this area of SLO3 and SLO4] a CPO should be considered.</p> <p>It is further submitted that the Residential Zoned Land Tax will not be successful in activating these lands [referring to both this area of SLO3 and SLO4]</p>
208	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 153614</a>	<p><b>[This submission sets out rezoning requests in relation to lands within SLO3 and other nearby lands]</b> It is requested that lands of c. 36.6ha at Deerpark, Dillonsdown, Blessington Demesne, and Newpaddocks, zoned EX 'Extractive Industry' (c. 24.8ha), E 'Employment' (c. 11.7ha) and OS2 'Natural Areas' (c. 0.2ha) in the Draft LAP, be zoned E 'Employment' (c. 24.8ha), RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2' (c. 7.8ha), and AOS 'Active Open Space' (c. 3.98ha). In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The addition of employment land use zoning north of SLO3 corresponds to lands east of the proposed N81.</li> <li>▪ Sand and gravel extraction is virtually completed at the quarry located west of the proposed N81 and the area currently zoned EX 'Extractive Industry' is available for other beneficial use.</li> <li>▪ Rezoning land as requested in SLO3 would have the benefit of creating additional land for residential purposes together with an ancillary area of Active Open Space and facilities which would be complementary to an existing sporting/recreational hub.</li> <li>▪ It is acknowledged that additional residential areas would be RN2 'New Residential – Priority 2', this proposed residential area can be justified on the basis of site suitability and compatibility with other nearby residential areas, providing additional residential capacity in light of the recent increase in housing targets. This area within SLO3 can be considered on the basis that it can form part of wider integrated housing/community facility/open space scheme that will be well connected to the existing built-up area.</li> <li>▪ The additional AOS lands in SLO3 would balance the requested reduction in SLO4 [addressed in relation to SLO4 below] and would also ensure that the delivery of AOS is not dependent on the development of a singular opportunity site.</li> <li>▪ Additional employment land is requested within the EX 'Extractive Industry' area, with the balance of the lands being considered strategic land for future development. The additional employment land would replace the employment land being removed by the proposed residential and active open space zoning requested for SLO3.</li> <li>▪ Given the strategic importance of Blessington in the context of employment provision, this area is ideally suited to further development for employment purposes. Land at this location can be re-graded as needed to provide for future development. There would be a net increase of 17.04ha of E 'Employment' lands.</li> </ul>



		<p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Rezoning Request:</b></p> 
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	<p>This submission is a duplicate of Submission No. 208, and is assessed under that heading.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>Issues in relation to zoning as raised in the submissions are dealt with in <b>Part B.8 Zoning</b> of this report. In summary:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recognised that additional AOS 'Active Open Space' is requested within the SLO3 in various locations by both submissions. The CE is satisfied that the provision of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands within the Draft LAP is adequate and has been informed by the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, with no change recommended.</li> <li>Furthermore, requested zonings on OS2 'Natural Areas' would conflict with the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit.</li> <li>Requests for additional RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1' lands 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), and would result in a reduction of E 'Employment' land.</li> </ul>		
<p>In relation to potential Compulsory Purchase Orders, this is not within the remit of a local area plan.</p>		
<p>Issues in relation to the implementation/effectiveness of the Residential Zoned Land Tax are not a matter for the local area plan.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
<p>No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.</p>		



#### Specific Local Objective 4 – Doran's Pit

No.	Name	Issues Raised
127	<a href="#">Blessington and District Forum</a> <a href="#">Ref 145547</a>	<p>It is requested that c. 8.6ha of lands at Haylands, zoned MU 'Mixed Use' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space', CE 'Community &amp; Education', T 'Tourism', and PU 'Public Utility' [<i>The exact requested zonings are unclear, however the most appropriate zoning to suit the requested uses would be those above</i>]. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The rezoning would see an increase in AOS lands but the retaining of biodiversity areas which could be utilised as a forestry walkway with a walkway linking Haylands &amp; Santryhill.</li> <li>▪ Multiple infrastructure projects could be completed on these lands including the N81-Knockieran Bridge road, tourism centre and glamping facility (with possible viewpoint with lake views), community centre, greenway parking in a central location close to the proposed Greenway, all while earmarking lands for much-needed sports facilities.</li> <li>▪ Lands should be zoned as such for the upcoming LAP with the AOS lands to be developed before any residential development can take place.</li> <li>▪ In conjunction with the lands at Santryhill, CPO should be considered. RZLT may not be implemented and will have no impact on a company with very large revenue/profits.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Zoning Request (incl. suggested active travel route):</b></p> 

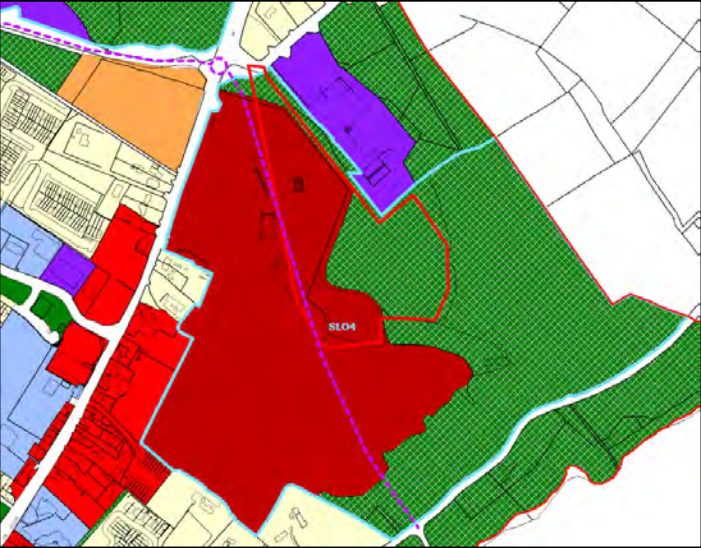
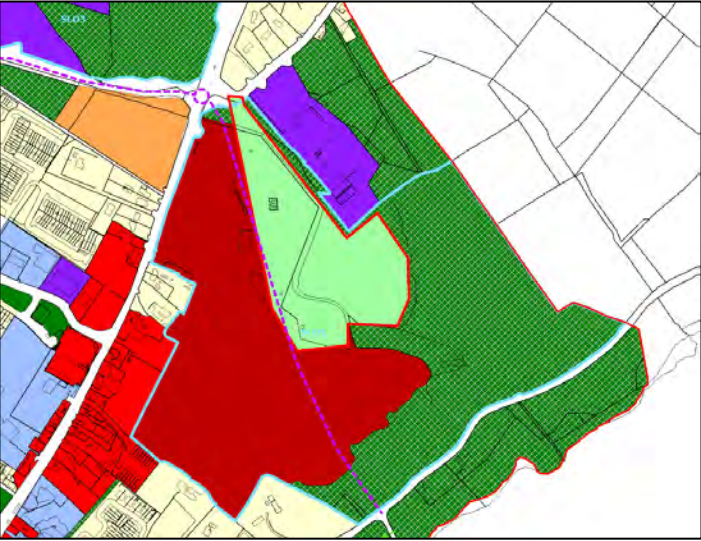


		It is further stated that the Forum is in full agreement with the planners SLO2 & SLO4 that sports facilities should be completed first before any residential development
208	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 153614</a>	<p>It is requested that the <b>SLO4 Concept Plan</b> be omitted. In support of this change, the following grounds put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The concept plan shows the zoned area to the east of the new road as green space/undeveloped land which is wholly inconsistent with the zoning map, and is a vast area and unsuitable location for active open space/tourism/car parking with no indication of a viable end user for these facilities. This is inconsistent with CPO 11.53 of the WCDP, which states the following: <i>'Where projects for new tourism projects identified in this chapter are not already provided for by existing plans / programmes or are not already permitted, then the feasibility of progressing these projects shall be examined, taking into account planning need, environmental sensitivities as identified in the SEA Environmental Report and the objectives of the plan relating to sustainable development.'</i></li> <li>▪ The delivery of infrastructure at this location will depend on market conditions and development viability. Inconsistencies between the zoning map and this concept plan will lead to developer uncertainty.</li> <li>▪ The reservation of c.2.7ha for amenity car parking/other tourist infrastructure is also a completely unsustainable model for tourism given the traffic it would generate, and is inconsistent with the need to facilitate modal shift to sustainable transport options as per Chapter 12 of the WCDP and the Climate Action Plan 2024, and CPOs 11.33 and 11.51, which state the following: <i>'CPO 11.33 To encourage eco-tourism projects<sup>2</sup> or those tourism projects with a strong environmentally sustainable design and operational ethos.'</i> <i>'CPO 11.51 Ensure the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.'</i></li> <li>▪ The location is completely unsuited to creating safe and secure neighbourhoods with overlooking from surrounding uses, the required facilities should be integrated within the fabric of the urban extension as opposed to vast areas of car parking with poor design outcomes and adverse effects on the local biodiversity area. The location of open space/tourism facilities is at odds with the requirements of Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads which requires a strong sense of enclosure along roads/pedestrian streets.</li> <li>▪ The proposed link road through SLO4 may attract a significant amount of traffic, the placement of this tourism facility may also add further pressure to this road and have negative implications on the proposed residential development.</li> </ul> <p>It is further requested that the quantum of Active Open Space be reduced in SLO4, from 3.3ha to 2ha. [Note that Section 4.4 of the submission indicates that no land use zoning is requested in this area, only amendments to SLO requirements/concept plans]. In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is noted that pre-draft consultation indicated a considerable shortfall in</li> </ul>



		<p>the provision of active open space, and the lack of a football field for Blessington AFC is acknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No rational is provided for 3.3ha at this location.</li> <li>▪ 2ha is more than sufficient to provide for the average football pitch (0.714ha) and MUGA area.</li> <li>▪ A smaller area of Active Open Space will also facilitate development that is in keeping with the development of a compact urban extension.</li> <li>▪ A replacement area of active open space of 3.98ha as requested above on lands zoned EX 'Extractive Industry', a net increase of 2.68ha.</li> </ul>
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	This submission is a duplicate of Submission No. 208 and is addressed under that heading.
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	<p>Submitter objects to SLO4 having a mixed use zoning having regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ insufficient infrastructure in Blessington to meet additional transport demands on our roads</li> <li>▪ insufficient sports facilities and</li> <li>▪ insufficient entertainment facilities</li> <li>▪ insufficient school facilities</li> </ul> <p>It is put forward that further residential units will put too much pressure on already breaking infrastructure; public transport is insufficient as it stands, the town doesn't have recreational or leisure facilities and roads are in a dire state. Numerous children travel outside of Blessington to attend school. This adds to further pollution and impacts on climate action mandate. The submitter requests that those matters are addressed first, before zoning any further land for residential, or mixed use purposes.</p> <p>SLO4 Concept Plan: The active open space here indicates a football pitches and tennis courts. The submitter puts forward that these are already available in Blessington and what is needed is an athletics track and swimming pool.</p>
103	<a href="#">J. P. &amp; M. Doyle Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 140434</a>	<p>It is requested that the indicative cycling and pedestrian link at the southern/rear boundary Blessington Mart be omitted from Figure B.8.5 and moved off the Blessington Mart site and onto the adjoining OS2 lands to the northeast on Map No. 6: Active Travel Strategy. In support of this change, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Following on from the request to reinstate the employment zoning at the Mart, there is no planning reason to retain an indicative pedestrian and cycling link into the Mart. If the OS2 zoning to the northeast of the Mart is retained, it would be more appropriate to show the indicative link into that OS2 land.</li> <li>▪ There is no key green infrastructure in the historic planning unit of the Mart – see Map No. 3 Key Green Infrastructure. There is a green corridor adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site, it would be more suitable for the indicative route as opposed to through the Blessington Mart site, which is not compatible with active travel proposals.</li> </ul>
205	<a href="#">Serpents Basketball Academy Blessington</a> <a href="#">Ref 163620</a>	<p><b>These 2 No submissions are very similar in content and, alongside background information on each club, request the following:</b></p> <p>In relation to the overall quantum of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands within the Draft LAP, the following is stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lands zoned AOS are owned by a developer and a quarry operator</li> </ul>



227	<a href="#">Blessington AFC</a> <a href="#">Ref 204711</a>	<p>and does not give much opportunity for a club to purchase their own land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None of the AOS land from the Blessington LAP 2013-2019 were utilised.</li> <li>▪ Blessington AFC has outgrown their facilities at Crosschapel, with the club having 800 members</li> <li>▪ The GAA have also outgrown their facilities.</li> <li>▪ Serpents Basketball Academy has c.100 members with c.100 on a waiting list, and rents outdoor and indoor space (with the indoor space being too small).</li> </ul> <p>It is requested that c. 6ha of lands at Haylands, zoned MU 'Mixed Use' and OS2 'Natural Areas' in the Draft LAP, be zoned AOS 'Active Open Space'. In support of this rezoning, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The lands could become a community hub with sports facilities, a community centre, playground, and parking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Draft LAP:</b></p>  <p><b>Zoning Request:</b></p> 
-----	---	--



		Regarding SLO2 and SLO4 in the written statement, submitters would agree that the sports facilities/road should be developed first before any residential development; the town needs various infrastructures to be completed with sporting facilities being a high importance area as they have not been developed over the last 11 to 12 years. This can only be attained with the current SLO2 and SLO4 to remain within the LAP & the written statement and to utilise the above proposals along with these objectives.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>Issues in relation to specific zoning requests as raised in the submissions are dealt with in <b>Part B.8 Zoning</b> of this report.</p> <p>In relation to potential Compulsory Purchase Orders, this is not within the remit of a local area plan.</p> <p>Issues in relation to the implementation/effectiveness of the Residential Zoned Land Tax are not a matter for the local area plan.</p> <p>Issues raised supporting the requirements set out in the Draft LAP for the development of sporting facilities before residential development are noted;</p> <p>In relation to the request for an indicative forest walkway through OS2 lands in SLO4, the text of SLO4 states the following: <i>'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.'</i> On this basis, the indication of an indicative route is not considered necessary.</p> <p>In relation to the pedestrian/cyclist link indicated (by an arrow) on the SLO4 Concept plan, the assessment of Submission No. 103 in <b>Part B.8.1 Zoning Requests</b> above, recommends that the active travel route through the Blessington Mart landholding be omitted. On this basis, the indicated link on the concept plan would not serve a purpose and is also recommended for omission.</p> <p>Noting the competing requests for both additional and a reduced quantum of AOS lands in SLO4, the provision of AOS lands by either zoning, or in this case a requirement within a Specific Local Objective, is in line with the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit. The CE is satisfied that the appropriate quantum of AOS lands have been provided for in the settlement, as per tables on pg. 50 of the Draft LAP Written Statement. On foot of these requests, no change is recommended. This issue is further addressed under <b>Part B.5 Community and Development</b> and <b>Part B.8 Zoning</b> of this report.</p> <p>In relation to an overall objection to the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning on the lands on the basis that transport/sport/school/entertainment infrastructure does not have the capacity for more residential units, attention is directed to the following statement in the text of SLO4: <i>'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.'</i> Residential development on the lands would therefore have to comply with the objectives in relation to residential phasing/core strategy as set out in the Draft LAP.</p> <p>Attention is also drawn to CPO 6.20 and CPO 7.46 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, which state the following:</p> <p><i>'CPO 6.20 Housing development shall be managed and phased to ensure that infrastructure is adequate or is being provided to match the needs of new residents.'</i></p> <p><i>New significant residential or mixed use development proposals (of which residential development forms a component), shall be required to be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Audit, to determine if social and</i></p>		



*community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.*

*New significant residential or mixed use development proposals shall be required to be accompanied by a 'Accessibility Report' that demonstrates that new residents / occupants / employees (including children and those with special mobility needs) will be able to safely access through means other than the private car:*

- (a) local services including shops, schools, health care and recreational facilities, and*
- (b) public transport services.*

*Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity/quality of existing or planned linkages.'*

*'CPO 7.46 To require open space to be provided in tandem with new residential development (in accordance with the standards set out in the Development & Design Standards Appendix).'*

In line with the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit, lands have been zoned throughout the plan are of both CE 'Community & Education', AOS 'Active Open Space' and OS1 'Open Space' to meet the needs of the level of growth envisioned in the prevailing Core Strategy. Furthermore, the development of SLO4 would deliver 3.3ha of Active Open Space, and 2.7ha of tourism infrastructure/amenity car parking and a road objective in tandem with any residential development, noting the statement in the text of SLO4 requiring the completion of the road objective and sports ground before the occupation of residential units. On this basis, the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning is considered appropriate.

In relation to the type of sports fields indicated on the SLO4 Concept Plan, this is entirely illustrative of location/access to any developed sports facilities within the overall development, and is not indicative of the type of facilities to be delivered. Text from the Draft LAP is referenced as follows: *'the exact type and layout of active open space uses shall be agreed with the Planning Authority'*. To clarify, the Planning Authority in question will, in most cases, be Wicklow County Council itself, or An Bord Pleanála as relevant, and refers to the development management/planning application stage. In 2025, as part of the National Sports Policy, the Wicklow County Council will be developing a Local Sports Plan for the County, which will identify infrastructure needs as well as a project delivery programme for new facilities. All of the submissions made with respect to sports infrastructure to this LAP will be considered in the preparation of the Local Sports Plan. On this basis, no amendments to the SLO4 Concept Plan are recommended.

In relation to the request to omit the concept plan from SLO4, the CE is of the opinion that the concept plan is entirely consistent with the lands zoned MU 'Mixed Use', in that the uses permitted under the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning is expanded upon within the text of SLO4, and for which the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning was intended in determining the zoning of the lands in the Draft LAP. The purpose of the MU 'Mixed Use' zoning in this case was a practical concern in that the final route / design of the road objective is indicative only, and setting out precise zoning boundaries in relation to this road may not be appropriate/possible. The CE is amenable to amending the text of SLO4 to clarify the uses that are intended for development within the MU 'Mixed Use' zoned area.

In relation to the location of the car park, the traffic generated, and the need to promote modal shift, the CE does not agree that the location of such a car parking facility would promote car usage. Map No. 7 indicates objectives that may aid supporting the previously planned extension of the Blessington Greenway, with the map showing the reserved land as potentially operating as a greenway supporting car park.

While the recently proposed greenway extension project has been recently refused consent by An Bord Pleanála, the 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. In this regard, the development of a tourism related car park, in close proximity and with direct access via the new road to the Blessington Lakes is an objective that is essential to retain. SLO4 is the optimal location in Blessington and in the wider area for providing supporting infrastructure for the future development of the tourism and recreation sector associated with the lakes.

Blessington serves a wide rural catchment population. Considering the current level of service of public transport in Blessington, many visitors to the lakes area and other amenities asset in Blessington, as well residents of Blessington's rural catchment will likely use the private car in some part of their journey. The location of the reserved land, and other locations intended for car parking as set out in BLESS48, is intended to facilitate modal shift to active travel in accessing the town centre, by diverting those entering the town from parking in the built-up area, allowing for road space reallocation and active travel infrastructure in central areas. Furthermore, any such facilities of large surface car parking could potentially be redeveloped in the future were the level of public transport service in Blessington to be significantly improved.

The provisions of the draft LAP, such as those relating to visitor centres, visitor car parking etc are recommended to be maintained in the plan, even in the absence of the current greenway project, as such facilities would support a wide range of tourism project and activities.

In relation to urban design consideration raised with regard to the concept plan, the description of SLO4 states the following: *'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 submission states that AOS/other facilities should be integrated into urban extensions as opposed to vast areas of car parking with poor design outcomes, lacking overlooking, at odds with the strong enclosure required by the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The text of SLO4 explicitly refers to providing a strong sense of enclosure, and the above vision for SLO4 explicitly states that it is intended that the predominantly residential part of the mixed use development be 'bounded' by the planned link street. To do so serves to provide a strong boundary and gateway function between the 'town proper' immediately adjacent to the town centre and the relatively open active open space/tourism/parking uses transitioning into OS2 lands and the settlement boundary/rural area. The layout in the concept plan also avoids a significant resident population having to cross the link street to access the town centre (with the possibility that residents may choose to drive), and avoids the link street being perceived as the 'centre' of the regenerated area over the central green area/plaza indicated in the concept plan. Passive surveillance can be provided to the eastern side of the link street by any tourism/accommodation/clubhouse structures, passing traffic on the active travel route, and by residences providing the strong enclosure to the western side of the street.

In relation to adverse impacts on the local biodiversity area, the text of SLO4 requires the development of appropriate buffer zones from site of biodiversity value.

On foot of the above, no changes are recommended to the concept plan of SLO4.

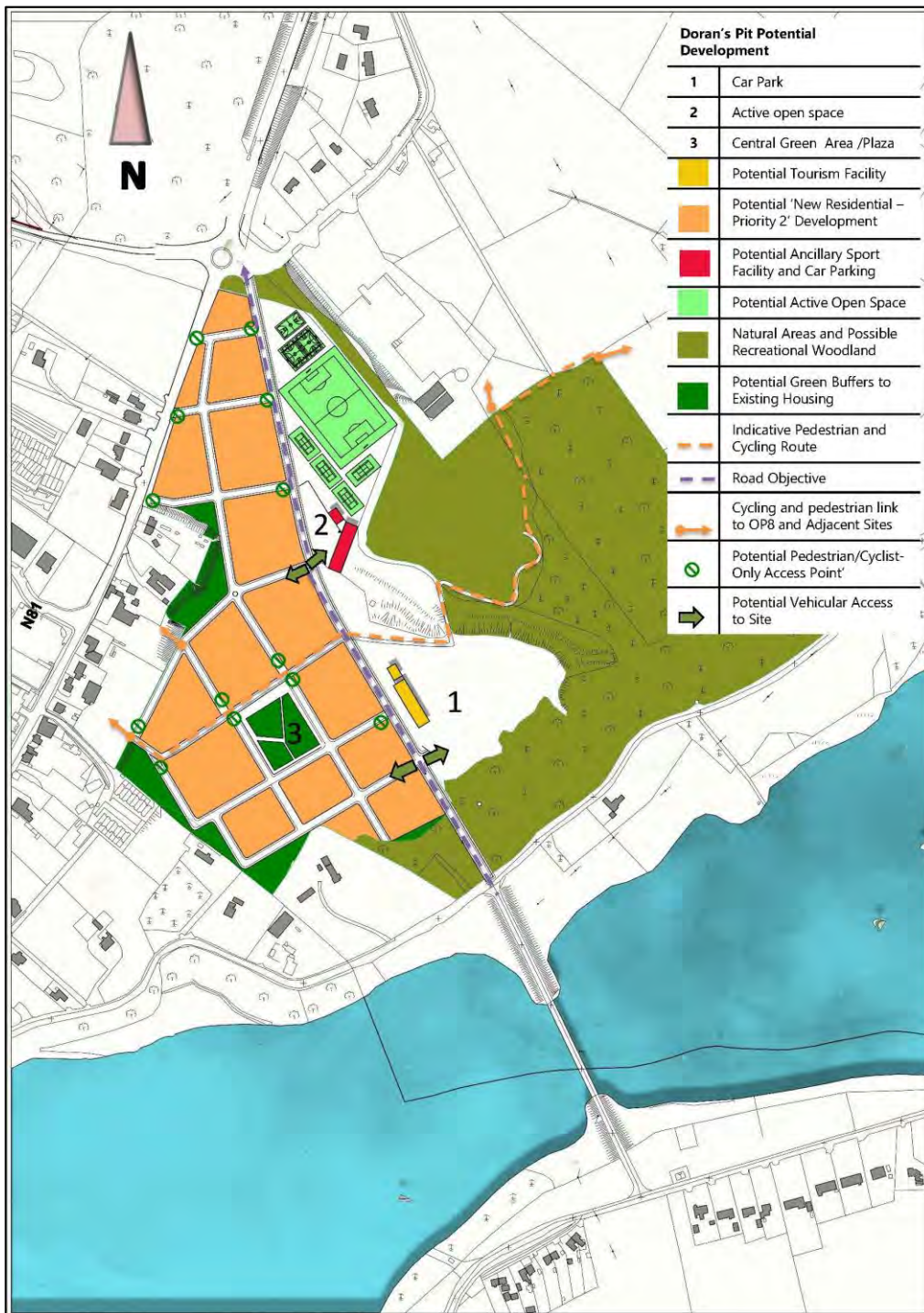
#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

Omit the cycling and pedestrian link to the Blessington Mart lands from the SLO4 concept plan.

**Change from:**



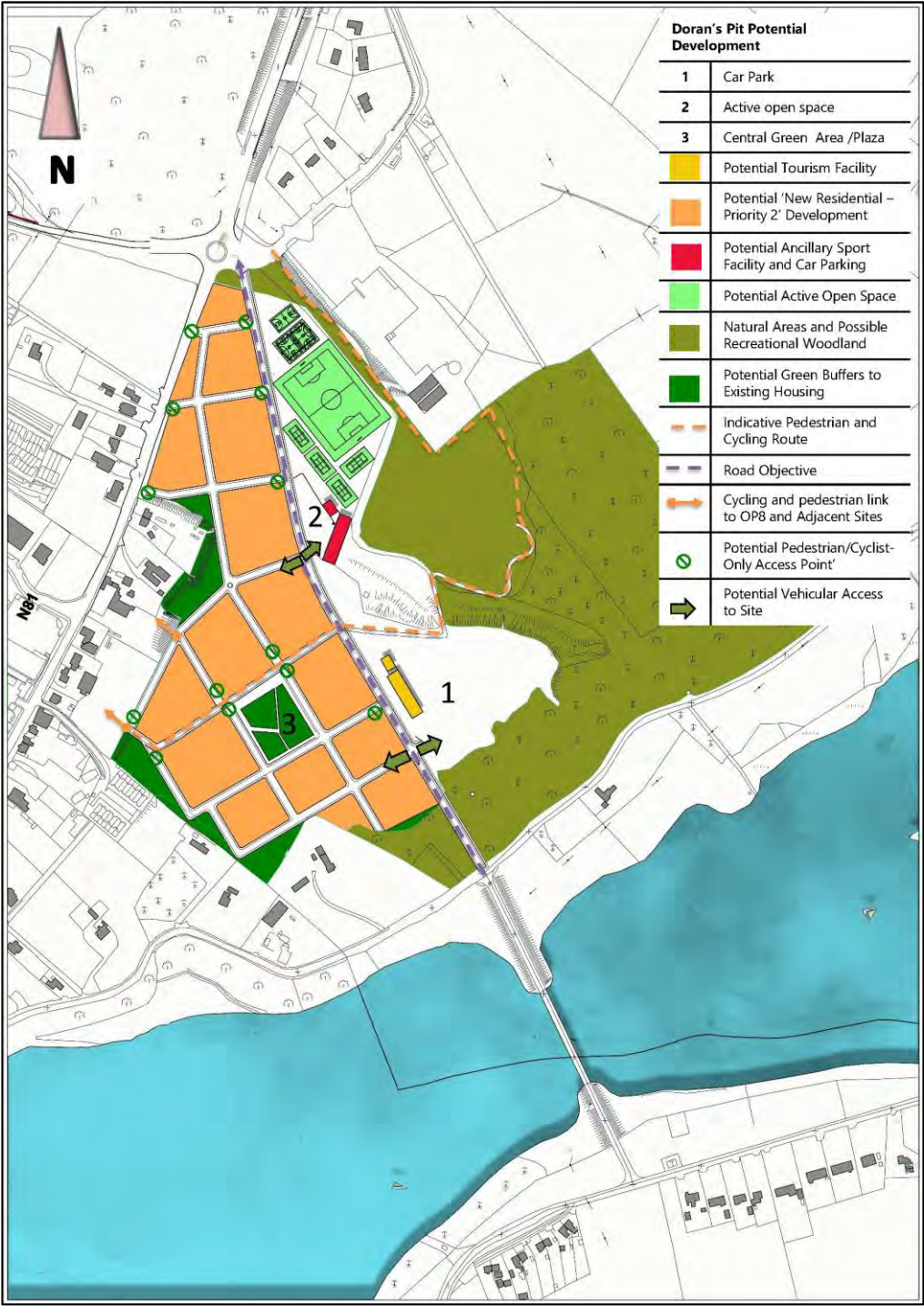
## Draft Plan SLO4 Concept Plan





Change to:

Proposed Amended Draft Plan SLO4 Concept Plan



And

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. 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 developed **edment** as follows:
  - (e) 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.
  - (f) 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.
  - (g) The development of at least c.3.3 ha 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.
  - (h) **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 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.



Specific Local Objective 5 – Burgage More (North)  
 Specific Local Objective 6 – Burgage More (Central)  
 Specific Local Objective 7 – Burgage More (South)

No.	Name	Issues Raised
19	<a href="#">Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association</a> <a href="#">Ref 133645</a>	<p>The submitters object generally to zoning in the south west of the settlement (SLO5, SLO6 and SLO7) given their proximity to the reservoir and distance from the centre of the settlement. They suggest the plan must seek to control urban sprawl and promote density, whilst making best use of improvements to the Town Centre under the town centre first plan and that these Specific Land Objectives do not comply with good land use planning and would lead to car dependent development. With respect Section B.8 of the draft plan, under the heading 'European Sites' which states:</p> <p><i>'The approach to zoning lands adjoining European Sites has been as follows:                      3. Where there is existing undeveloped lands, the lands have only be zoned for new development where it can be justified that such zoning and development arising therefrom is essential for the town to achieve its development vision and strategic objectives. In accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive 1992 and the Planning &amp; Development Act, any proposed development with potential to impact upon the integrity of a European Site shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment;'</i></p> <p>The submitters object to the use of point 3 on the grounds that undeveloped lands that have the potential to impact on the integrity of a European Site must not be zoned in any case – with the exception of open space.</p>
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>In relation to the approach to zoning lands adjoining European Sites, the CE is satisfied that the approach to zoning (which is set out in the Wicklow CDP and undergone SEA and AA) is correct and zoning provisions of the Draft Plan are consistent with this approach. Significant areas of lands have been zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' as buffer zones around the Lakeshore, generally is excess of that under the Blessington Local Area Plan 2013-2019. The extent of these OS2 'Natural Areas' lands has been informed by the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit. Furthermore, the Draft LAP has undergone Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Issues raised in this submission with respect to SEA and AA are addressed in <b>Section 5 SEA and AA</b> of this report.</p> <p>In relation to the zoning of the SLO as being car-dependent and distant from the town centre, the accompanying Blessington Local Transport Assessment indicates that the lands are within walking distance to public transport and also states the following:</p> <p><i>'The spatial extent of Blessington is such that most of the settlement is within 15 minutes' walk of the town centre (as represented by the Downshire monument). Land zoned for development within or just beyond such a walking distance would be easily accessible by bicycle in a short time to/from other parts of the settlement were adequate infrastructure in place.'</i></p> <p>A range of objectives supporting the development of adequate active travel infrastructure are included in the Draft LAP. Furthermore, the SLO does not extend further from the town centre than other existing areas of the settlement, e.g. Burgage Manor.</p> <p>On the basis of the above, no changes are recommended to the Draft Blessington LAP 2025.</p>		
<b>Chief Executive's Recommendation</b>		
No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.		



## Specific Local Objective 8

No.	Name	Issues Raised
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes Properties Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 172755</a>	<p>It is requested that the below text of SLO8 be omitted:  <del>Permission for additional residential development within this SLO will not be considered unless this town park will be completed and available for use, in full, upon the occupation of the 1st house.</del></p> <p>In support of this, the following grounds are put forward:</p> <p>The suggested wording that permission for '<i>additional residential development... will not be considered</i>' is quite loosely drafted, with serious consequences that the planning authority would not even entertain an application at the site pending completion of the park. Whilst the park has planning permission, it will not be commenced until there is certainty in relation to the Phase 2 residential development. The viability of delivering the park is contingent upon the delivery of housing they are not mutually exclusive.</p> <p>It is further requested that the draft LAP highlight the successful implementation of Phase 1 of the town park.</p>
5	<a href="#">Marcin Jurkowski</a> <a href="#">Ref 183854</a>	Regarding "Map No. 1 Land Use Zoning Objectives" – submitter is happy to see open space under SLO8 and active open space under SLO02, close to town center, instead of building new houses and apartment everywhere (especially if there is plenty of space not too far away).
13	<a href="#">Rachel Murphy</a> <a href="#">Ref 173347</a>	The submitter objects to SLO8 having a further residential zoning on that further residential units will put too much pressure on already breaking infrastructure; public transport is insufficient as it stands, the town doesn't have recreational or leisure facilities and roads are in a dire state. Numerous children travel outside of Blessington to attend school. This adds to further pollution and impacts on climate action mandate. The submitter requests that those matters are addressed first, before zoning any further land for residential purposes.
110	<a href="#">Carmel Cashin</a> <a href="#">Ref 163114</a>	The submitter suggests that the area that would be most suited to a community centre would be SLO8 and this would require zoning for active open space as opposed to open space. This space would be easily accessible for all members of the community. This area could be further utilised with a 400m running track to facilitate track and field events such as community games, Safe walking spaces for our more vulnerable community members but also provide a home for a club in the town the Lakeshore Striders who will have nowhere to train their adult or juvenile groups. This space could be used to meet the needs of a significant cohort. The community centre would become a hive of activity and a safe space for service users. This is not a sports centre but a community centre.
<b>Chief Executive Response</b>		
<p>In relation to the requirement for the completion of the town park upon the occupation of the 1<sup>st</sup> house, it is considered that the text is entirely appropriate and will not hinder the granting of permissions with conditions requiring such. On this basis, the requested amendment is not recommended.</p> <p>In relation to the recognition of the completion of the town park, the CE welcomes the completion and recent opening of Phase 1 of the town park as an important asset to the town of Blessington. However, it would not appear that amending the Draft LAP in that respect would have any material planning effect and is unnecessary.</p> <p>Submission No. 5 is noted.</p>		



In relation to an overall objection to the zoning on the lands on the basis that transport/sport/school/entertainment infrastructure does not have the capacity for more residential units, lands have been zoned throughout the plan are of both CE 'Community & Education', AOS 'Active Open Space' and OS1 'Open Space' to meet the needs of the level of growth envisioned in the prevailing Core Strategy, in line with the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit.

Attention is also drawn to CPO 6.20 and CPO 7.46 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, which state the following:

*'CPO 6.20 Housing development shall be managed and phased to ensure that infrastructure is adequate or is being provided to match the needs of new residents.'*

*New significant residential or mixed use development proposals (of which residential development forms a component), shall be required to be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Audit, to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services.*

*New significant residential or mixed use development proposals shall be required to be accompanied by a 'Accessibility Report' that demonstrates that new residents / occupants / employees (including children and those with special mobility needs) will be able to safely access through means other than the private car:*

- (a) local services including shops, schools, health care and recreational facilities, and*
- (b) public transport services.*

*Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity/quality of existing or planned linkages.'*

*'CPO 7.46 To require open space to be provided in tandem with new residential development (in accordance with the standards set out in the Development & Design Standards Appendix).'*

Furthermore, the development of SLO8 would deliver a significant 15.3ha area of Open Space (town park) in tandem with any residential development, noting the statement in the text of SLO8 requiring the completion of the road objective and sports ground before the occupation of residential units. On this basis, the zoning of the lands as per the Draft LAP is considered appropriate.

In relation to the suggested community centre in SLO8, such a use would be already permissible the other land use zonings in the SLO, namely RN1 'New Residential Priority 1' and in a wide variety of zones through the town in close proximity to this area. The lands zoned OS1 in SLO8 are considered more suitable for open parkland type uses given particularly the archeology of the area, and are not therefore being promoted for the development of community centres or sports grounds in this plan. In terms of the requests for a running track, a significant area of AOS 'Active Open Space' lands are situated immediately adjacent to SLO 8 in SLO 2, which would permit the development of such a facility.

On this basis, no changes are recommended to SLO8.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025-2031.



### Appendix 3 Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit

A large number of submissions refer specifically to the provision sports and recreation facilities including but not exclusive to athletics, ball sports and the provision of a swimming pool to serve Blessington and West Wicklow. A number of submissions also related to the provision of facilities along the lakeshore for water sports. Concerns were also raised with regard to the provision of education and childcare facilities, general services including healthcare and community facilities such as graveyards, parks and community centres. These submissions have been addressed under **Part B.5 Community Development**, of this report.

The submissions below relate specifically to the population projections and calculations for open space areas in the Blessington Social Infrastructure Audit.

#### Calculation of Open Space Areas

No.	Name	Issues Raised
15	<a href="#">Joan and Billy Flynn</a> <a href="#">Ref 150523</a>	<p>Based on a calculated shortfall the Social Infrastructure Audit concludes that 9.3ha should be zoned for additional OS1 'Open Space' use. It is submitted that this analysis is flawed for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The calculation of the amount of open space to be provided per 1000 population is based on section 8.1 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.</li> <li>▪ The Audit adopts a population figure of 15,000 as the current population and 17,000 as the future population. However, these population figures relate to the catchment area, not the town area.</li> <li>▪ The additional 9.3 hectares of zoned lands are all located within the town boundary, many of the existing open space facilities that serve the catchment population are provided outside the town.</li> <li>▪ It is submitted that the open space audit should therefore also take into account the available open space facilities within the catchment area.</li> <li>▪ The audit fails to include a qualitative assessment of current open space facilities provided in the town.</li> <li>▪ The audit concludes a current shortfall of open space of 7.68 hectares based on a quantitative analysis using county wide development standards without a qualitative survey of use and demand amongst the population of existing facilities.</li> <li>▪ In February 2023, Wicklow County Council published a commissioned report into the community and recreational needs of the Baltinglass Municipal District. This survey used qualitative as well as quantitative criteria. The survey mentioned the need for specific facilities (including a swimming pool and a football field) but no reference is made to dissatisfaction with the quality of open space in the town.</li> <li>▪ The audit is unclear whether the increase of 9.3 hectares of OS1 zoned lands is in addition to existing facilities or in addition to existing zoned lands.</li> <li>▪ The unmet current demand for open space as stated on page 58 of the Audit document is based on an assumed existing provision of 13 hectares (8.72+4.15+0.17). This existing provision relates not to existing zoned lands</li> </ul>



		<p>but to existing open space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the figure 2.10 in the SIA the two large areas of OS1 zoned lands (New Town Park and the SLO1 area are not existing facilities. According to the accompanying table, a part of the New Town Park is included (3.61 hectares) because it is under construction, but not the SLO1 area. It can therefore be concluded that the existing area of open space as listed on page 55 of 13 hectares is existing facilities, not existing zoned land in the current LAP.</li> </ul>
153	<a href="#">Dunmoy Properties Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 212157</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted that additional lands should be zoned for residential development to cater for future population projections. In this regard it is noted that the existing NFP growth estimates and housing targets are under review.</li> <li>The existing NFP estimated the annual rate of population growth in the Country would be 0.9% per annum. The Census indicated that the growth rate was actually 1.3% p.a., with Wicklow growing at 1.5% p.a. Provision.</li> <li>Provision should be made for pent up demand which has grown considerably over the last few years as access to the housing market has proved impossible for large numbers of people. This has been heavily influenced by lack of supply.</li> </ul>
219	<a href="#">Cairn Homes</a> <a href="#">Ref 172755</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft LAP seeks to zone Cairn's lands for Active Open Space. Submitted that this is entirely unfeasible as presented and can only be implemented with development to support the significant investment required.</li> <li>The AOS area of 15 hectares has been sized to cater for a catchment population of 17,000 which is entirely inappropriate.</li> <li>The allocation of AOS has been grossly miscalculated based on flawed analysis for the town. The Social Infrastructure Assessment Report wrongly assesses need based on Level 2 of the Community Facilities Hierarchy Model – 'Settlements with population range of 7000-15,000 rather than Level 3 (2,000-7,000).</li> <li>Using a more accurate max. population of 7,000 the AOS demand is 11.2Ha. (not 24 Ha), with unmet demand of 2.48 Ha. not 15.28 Ha. (Ref. B.8).</li> <li>Taking into account lands in Co. Kildare, the SIA considers the target population for the settlement in 2031 is taken as 7,048. This crass calculation places the settlement just over the threshold into a Level 2 of the Community Facilities Hierarchy Model – 'Settlements with population range 7,000-15,000'.</li> <li>The Draft LAP's Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) Report refers to the standard at Section 8.1 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 for active open space: • active open space shall be required as a rate of 2.4ha per 1,000 population divided into: – 1.6ha outdoor play space (pitches, courts, sports grounds) – 0.6ha casual play spaces (parks) – 0.2ha equipped play space (playgrounds and MUGAs) The current population is approx. 5,611 not the catchment of 15,000 used at page 58 (based on level 2 of the settlement model) as shown below.</li> </ul>
214	<a href="#">Blessington GAA</a> <a href="#">Ref 180116</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blessington GAA grounds are identified in the Plan as making up a significant proportion of the outdoor play space within the town at 7.9ha of 8.72ha. While the plan is correct in ascertaining that Blessington GAA currently occupies a site of c. 7.9ha this land area provides for only three playing pitches and a</li> </ul>



		<p>smaller all-weather pitch totaling c.4ha of actual play space once all car parking, storage, club facilities and circulation space etc has been factored in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submitted that this is a miscalculation in open space provision and that additional land should be zoned for AOS.</li> </ul>
225	<a href="#">Belgard Estates Ltd.</a> <a href="#">Ref 204227</a>	Submitted that there is insufficient justification provided in the Draft LAP in relation to the quantum of active open space, 3.3ha, required in SLO4. Requested that the quantum is reduced from 3.3ha to 2ha and a replacement area of active open space at alternative location within the submitter's landholding which could provide a total area of 3.98 ha of active open space in close proximity to another proposed residential area.

#### Chief Executive Response

The draft LAP, in combination with the Social Infrastructure Audit appendix of the LAP has carried out a full audit of sports and recreation existing and future land use needs within the settlement. The draft LAP has zoned the required amount of land for Active Open Space (AOS) and Community (CE), which allows for sports facilities to be developed, for the future needs of the population of the settlement and its catchment.

Blessington is identified as a Level 3 Settlement 'self-sustaining growth town' in the County settlement hierarchy.

Blessington is a service hub for a wide rural catchment including the villages of Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lackan, Ballyknockan, Dunlavin, Donard and Valkeymount (in County Wicklow), Rathmore, Eadestown, Ballymore (in County Kildare) and Brittas in County Dublin. In terms of access the town has a strategic location along the N81 in proximity to the Dublin metropolitan area and at the entrance to the west of the County. The town is therefore a hub for the provision of community facilities including Active Open Space facilities which will serve residents living in its hinterland.

While it is acknowledged that many communities within the rural catchment of Blessington would have sports and recreation facilities such as playing pitches and playgrounds, it is recognised that Blessington, as the only Level 3 Settlement (Settlement Hierarchy) in West Wicklow, is envisaged to provide more specialist sports and recreation facilities which could include; a swimming pool, sports track, multisport playing pitches and courts etc. An audit of the active open space facilities within the catchment of Blessington would therefore not be appropriate.

It is submitted above that the allocation of AOS has been miscalculated and that the Social Infrastructure Assessment Report wrongly assesses need based on Level 2 of the Community Facilities Hierarchy Model – 'Settlements with population range of 7000-15,000 rather than Level 3 (2,000-7,000). In this regard the Social Infrastructure Audit notes the following:

- As per the Core Strategy the population target for Blessington (in Co. Wicklow) by Q2 2028 is 6,145, with a housing growth target of an additional 514 units for the 2016-2031 period.
- The target population of Blessington (in Co. Wicklow) for 2031 is 6,313.
- The Social Infrastructure Audit acknowledges that since the 2022 Census, there has been new residential development built in Blessington and it is likely that through planning permissions for



residential development that are either recently completed, currently under construction and permissions that have not commenced yet, the 2031 population target will be fulfilled well before that date.

- The Social Infrastructure Audit also has to consider the population target for the area of Blessington located in the jurisdiction of Co.Kildare, noting that a much larger proportion of the town is located in Co. Wicklow and that this portion of the town will provide the vast majority of the community facilities serving the Blessington population living in Co. Kildare, including open space and sports facilities.
- When the 2029 total target population for Blessington (Co. Kildare) and the 2031 total target population for Blessington (Co. Wicklow) is considered this gives an estimated population for the town of Blessington (Co. Kildare and Co. Wicklow) of c. 7,048 during the lifetime of the plan, hence the Social Infrastructure Audit is based on Level 2 of the Community Facilities Hierarchy Model.

With regard to the calculation of the level of AOS zoning lands, as noted above, Blessington also serves a rural hinterland. In this regard:

- The catchment population was based on the 2022 population of the Electoral Divisions located within a c.15 minute drivetime from Blessington town centre.
- The 2022 Census baseline population for the catchment was c.15,000 including Blessington town (Co. Kildare and Co. Wicklow).
- The population of Blessington town (Co. Kildare and Co. Wicklow) and its rural catchment is projected to increase to c.17,000 during the lifetime of the plan having regard to relevant core strategy as outlined in the 2022-2028 Wicklow County Development Plan and the 2023-2029 Kildare County Development Plan.

In accordance with the Planning Authority's Active Open Space Policy, active open space shall be required as a rate of 2.4ha per 1,000 population divided into:

- 1.6ha outdoor play space (pitches, courts, sports grounds)
- 0.6ha casual play spaces (parks)
- 0.2ha equipped play space (playgrounds and MUGAs)

In this regard it is further noted that normally AOS in accordance with this standard will be zoned through the local plan process and individual development will be required to either deliver some or all of the space required (through an action area agreement) or via development levies.

Based on these calculations a total of 27.2ha of AOS and a total of c13.6ha of OS1 (total 40.8ha) would be required to accommodate sports facilities, recreational amenity areas and play spaces to serve the 2031 projected population of Blessington (Co. Kildare and Co. Wicklow) and its catchment. A total of 46ha has been zoned OS1 and AOS across the draft LAP area comprising of c.23ha AOS and c.23ha OS1. This includes existing facilities. A additional c3.3ha of land is reserved for AOS on SLO4, bringing the total area of lands specifically reserved for AOS to c.27ha. It is further noted that active sports facilities can be developed on TC, CE and other MU lands and not exclusively on AOS zoned lands. It is therefore considered that the draft Plan has adequately and appropriately zoned for active open space uses for the lifetime of the plan in accordance with National Guidance and has located AOS on sites where the development of such facilities would not have an adverse impact on any protected sites while still located close to the town centre and existing and proposed residential areas and schools.



In relation to the area of lands zoned OS1, while issues are raised in relation to the exact calculation of required areas, the areas required in the Social Infrastructure Audit are stated as **minimum** areas (e.g. pg. 58 of the audit). On this basis, if another reason arises for lands to be zoned OS1, beyond the minimum needs of Social Infrastructure Audit that may be taken into account regardless of any area requirement. Recommended Objective 5 of the Social Infrastructure Audit states the following: *'Additional OS1 'Open Space' land may be required to account for the recommendations of the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit and Blessington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, where relevant.'* This is restated as having been taken into account in a footnote on pg. 70 of the Audit. As indicated above, the rational for the zoning of the OS1 lands in the plan area and indeed the OS2 lands identified in the plan area were also informed by the accompanying Blessington Green Infrastructure Audit.

It is also submitted that the Social Infrastructure Audit should have excluded all car parking, storage, club facilities and circulation space associated with sports facilities. In this regard such facilities are an integral part of sports facilities as they are directly associated with day to day functioning of these facilities, therefore, it would not be appropriate to zone additional AOS lands to accommodate car parking and ancillary facilities associated with the main AOS function/sports facility on a site. In this regard the Social Infrastructure Audit has appropriately calculated the required quantum of AOS lands to serve Blessington and its catchment.

The CE is satisfied with the details of the Social Infrastructure Audit and that an appropriate level of land has been zoned to accommodate the future AOS and OS1 requirements for Blessington and its catchment during the lifetime of the plan.

#### **Chief Executive's Recommendation**

No change to the draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.



## Section 5 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

Submission No. 206. Office of Planning Regulator			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	Various recommendations, including those relating to Poulaphouca Reservoir Water Quality	The protection of water bodies and water quality, including drinking water sources, is provided for under various provisions from the Draft Plan and existing County Development Plan. This issue is also identified under other submissions and could be addressed in more detail in the Draft Plan.	If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.

Submission No. 201. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	This submission makes various recommendations relating to archaeology for integration into the Plan.	The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the protection and management of archaeology. If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.	None.



Submission No. 2. EPA			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>A</b>	<p>A chara, We acknowledge your notice, dated 29th October 2024, in relation to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 ('the Plan') and associated SEA Environmental Report.</p> <p>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 the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the plan. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.</p> <p>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 the attached guidance document 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources'.</p> <p>This document is updated regularly and sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority Land Use Plans. We suggest that you take this guidance document into account and incorporate the relevant recommendations, in finalising and implementing the Plan.</p> <p>Wicklow County Council should also ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p>	<p>The 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources' document has been considered in the SEA of the Plan and will be kept on file for reference throughout the SEA process.</p> <p>Wicklow County Council has ensured that the Plan aligns with and is consistent with higher-level plans and programmes, including the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.</p>	None.
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>B</b>	<p><b>Content of the Environmental Report</b> The SEA Regulations set out the information to be contained in an Environmental Report.</p> <p><b>Assessment of Alternatives</b> You should describe the alternatives considered and how the selection and assessment of these has led to the selection of the preferred alternative. You should assess the alternatives against the 'Strategic Environmental Objectives' identified in the SEA ER.</p> <p><b>Assessment of Environmental Effects</b> You should assess and document the full range of likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, including the potential for cumulative effects in combination with other relevant Plans/ Programmes and Projects.</p>	<p>The Environmental Report that accompanies the Draft Plan addresses each of these issues. The cited Guidance on SEA-related monitoring has been considered in the preparation of monitoring measures and will be considered when preparing the SEA Statement at the end of the process.</p>	None.



	<p><b>Mitigation Measures</b></p> <p>Where you have identified the potential for likely significant effects, you should provide appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or minimise these. You should ensure that the Plan includes clear commitments to implement the mitigation measures.</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p>The Monitoring Programme should be flexible to take account of specific environmental issues and unforeseen adverse impacts should they arise. It should consider and deal with the possibility of cumulative effects. Monitoring of both positive and negative effects should be considered. The monitoring programme should set out the various data sources, monitoring frequencies and responsibilities. If the monitoring identifies adverse impacts during the implementation of the Plan, Wicklow County Council should ensure that suitable and effective remedial action is taken.</p> <p>Guidance on SEA-related monitoring is available on the EPA website at <a href="https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategicenvironmental-assessment/06695-EPA-SEA-Statements-and-Monitoring-Report.pdf">https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategicenvironmental-assessment/06695-EPA-SEA-Statements-and-Monitoring-Report.pdf</a></p>		
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
C	<p><b>Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024</b></p> <p>In October 2024, the EPA published the latest iteration of our 4-yearly State of the Environment Report. This report should be considered and integrated as appropriate, in implementing the plan or programme over its lifetime. It is available at: <a href="https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-ofenvironment-report-/">https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-ofenvironment-report-/</a>.</p>	The Plan preparation and associated SEA has taken into account the EPA's State of the Environment Report 2024.	None.
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
D	<p><b>Future Amendments to the Plan</b></p> <p>You should screen any future amendments to the Plan for likely significant effects, using the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Plan.</p>	Any future amendments will be screened for effects in accordance with SEA Regulations and using a methodology consistent with the method of assessment applied in the SEA of the Draft Plan.	None.
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
E	<p><b>SEA Statement – "Information on the Decision"</b></p> <p>Once the Plan is adopted, you should prepare an SEA Statement that summarises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;</li> <li>How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan;</li> <li>The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and,</li> <li>The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.</li> <li>You should send a copy of the SEA Statement with the above information to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.</li> </ul>	An SEA Statement will be prepared including the required information and taking into account the cited EPA guidance on SEA Statements.	None.



	Guidance on preparing SEA Statements is available on the EPA website at the following link: <a href="https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/assessment/strategicenvironmental-assessment/06695-EPA-SEA-Statements-and-Monitoring-Report.pdf">https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/assessment/strategicenvironmental-assessment/06695-EPA-SEA-Statements-and-Monitoring-Report.pdf</a> .		
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
F	<b>Environmental Authorities</b> Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Protection Agency;</li> <li>• Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;</li> <li>• Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications; and</li> <li>• Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	The relevant environmental authorities have been consulted with throughout the SEA/Plan preparation process.	None.



Submission No. 179. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions under a number of headings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Action</li> <li>• Renewable Energy</li> <li>• Electricity Grid</li> <li>• Built Environment and Heating</li> <li>• Compact Growth and District Heating</li> <li>• Circular Economy and Waste</li> <li>• Telecommunications</li> <li>• Air Quality</li> </ul>	<p>The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the achievement of objectives under the headings laid out in the submission. If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>	None.

Submission No.213. Office of Public Works			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions relating to flood risk management.</p>	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>	None.

Submission No.137. Uisce Éireann			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions under a number of headings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy</li> <li>• Water Services Infrastructure</li> <li>• Water Supply and Network</li> <li>• Wastewater Collection and Treatment</li> <li>• Water Framework Directive</li> <li>• Drinking Water Source Protection &amp; Human Health</li> <li>• Nature Based Solutions for Surface Water Runoff &amp; Water Quality</li> <li>• Blessington Town Centre First</li> <li>• Planning Applications &amp; Connections to the Uisce Eireann Network</li> </ul>	<p>The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the achievement of objectives under the headings laid out in the submission.</p> <p>The protection of water bodies and water quality, including drinking water sources, is provided for under various provisions from the Draft Plan and existing County Development Plan. This issue is also identified under other submissions and could be addressed in more detail in the Draft Plan.</p>	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>



Submission No. 127. HSE			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions under a number of headings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre Regeneration</li> <li>• Social and Community Development</li> <li>• Service Infrastructure</li> <li>• Service Infrastructure</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Measuring Progress</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>• Disaster Risk Management including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)</li> <li>• Inclusiveness</li> <li>• Physical Activity/Sustainable Movement</li> <li>• Air Quality</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Water Quality and Waste Water</li> <li>• Circular Economy/Waste</li> <li>• Sustainable/Healthy Diets</li> <li>• Tobacco and Disposable Vapes Free Ireland</li> </ul>	<p>The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the achievement of objectives under the headings laid out in the submission. If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>	None.



Submission No. 127. Blessington and District Forum			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>A</b>	Recommendation 1 – see submission	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Burgage Bay is an area of valuable shallow wetland habitat and one of the key areas within and surrounding the Plan area for wintering waterbirds such as Teal, Wigeon and Goldeneye. It is part of the Poulaphouca Special Protection Area, which is designated and afforded high levels of protection under the European Habitats Directive and transposing Regulations. The preparation of the Plan was informed by the fact that this area is susceptible to disturbance from human encroachment on the surrounding subject lands. Furthermore, lands in this area form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and a Local Biodiversity Area (a site of local biodiversity value that is not within designated areas).</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	None.
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>B</b>	Recommendation 2 – see submission	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding</p>	None.



		<p>or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Lands at Santryhill and Haylands form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and Local Biodiversity Areas (Santryhill and Haylands have been identified as sites of high local biodiversity value).</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
C	Recommendation 3 – see submission	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Lands south of Haylands are adjacent to the Poulaphuca Special Protection Area, which is designated and afforded high levels of protection under the European Habitats Directive and transposing Regulations. The preparation of the Plan was informed by the fact that encroachment on the reservoir and associated feeding areas for geese may disrupt connectivity; and shore or lake-borne recreation may affect roosting and/or feeding.</p> <p>Furthermore, lands in this area form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species.</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	None.
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
D	Various further recommendations.	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of these various recommendations, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>	None.



Submission No. 162. Poulaphouca Paddlers			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information on the club and their activities. As identified in the submission: "The committees of the past 4/5 years having been considering the requirements we will need to meet the number of people interested in joining our club. Ideally the club would have a space on the shore in a sheltered part of the lake near Burgage. This space would need at a minimum, a secure storage space for all of our equipment as well as appropriate changing facilities."</p>	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Burgage Bay is an area of valuable shallow wetland habitat and one of the key areas within and surrounding the Plan area for wintering waterbirds such as Teal, Wigeon and Goldeneye. It is part of the Poulaphouca Special Protection Area, which is designated and afforded high levels of protection under the European Habitats Directive and transposing Regulations. The preparation of the Plan was informed by the fact that this area is susceptible to disturbance from human encroachment on the surrounding subject lands. Furthermore, lands in this area form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and a Local Biodiversity Area (a site of local biodiversity value that is not within designated areas).</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	None

Submission No. 188. Kieran Doyle			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the reservoir and environmental issues</li> <li>• Wastewater &amp; the River Liffey and capacity for zoned land</li> <li>• Surfacewater</li> <li>• Joint LAP with Kildare County Council</li> </ul>	<p>The protection of water bodies and water quality, including drinking water sources, is provided for under various provisions from the Draft Plan and existing County Development Plan. This issue is also identified under other submissions and could be addressed in more detail in the Draft Plan. If any amendments</p>	



		are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.	
--	--	--	--

Submission No. 229. Blessington AFC			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>A</b>	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>From the previous 2013-2019 LAP none of the zoned AOS lands were utilised throughout the town. This is 11 to 12 years of zero growth for any of the clubs in the area. There are 4 local clubs with no facilities within the town, the soccer club, the rugby club, the running/athletics club and the basketball club. This is over 1500+ members of sporting clubs in the town of Blessington with no facilities to participate in their sport.</p> <p>This shows the need for the right lands to be zoned AOS for them to be utilised. Blessington AFC would like to make the submission for the lands at Burgage More as per Site Layout Recommendation 1 below to be zoned AOS. These lands as per Map No. 4 Flood Risk are not indicated as flood risk areas which makes them more of an ideal location for the many sporting facilities required. See below image from this Flood Risk Map with the lands marked with a star.</p> <p><i>Refer to submission for flood map</i></p> <p>We as a club are aware of the report made by the biodiversity officer for Wicklow but these lands cannot just be zoned natural open space if it is anyway possible for similar surveys of these lands to show that they can be used for sporting facilities. There is a draft Masterplan of these lands indicating what could be possible – see Site Layout Recommendation 1 below. These lands are owned by the ESB and so are state owned. This would offer local clubs a much greater chance of purchasing these lands than other sites within the town. Funding can then be achieved once the lands are owned to develop the many facilities required by these clubs.</p> <p>The following facilities could be implemented on these lands which would benefit 4 or 5 different clubs within the town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-sport astro turf pitch with running track</li> <li>• Soccer and Rugby pitches</li> <li>• External and Internal full-size Basketball courts</li> <li>• Paddle Courts</li> <li>• Parking – For the Greenway and for the many organised runs throughout the year</li> </ul> <p>These lands to be zoned AOS would give the opportunity for these few clubs to develop their own facilities within the town and give much needed amenities for the community.</p>	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Burgage Bay is an area of valuable shallow wetland habitat and one of the key areas within and surrounding the Plan area for wintering waterbirds such as Teal, Wigeon and Goldeneye. It is part of the Poulaphouca Special Protection Area, which is designated and afforded high levels of protection under the European Habitats Directive and transposing Regulations. The preparation of the Plan was informed by the fact that this area is susceptible to disturbance from human encroachment on the surrounding subject lands. Furthermore, lands in this area form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and a Local Biodiversity Area (a site of local biodiversity value that is not within designated areas).</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	None
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
<b>B</b>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Blessington AFC would like to make the submission for the lands at Haylands or Doran's Pit as per Site Layout Recommendation 2 to be zoned AOS.</p>	<p>Environmental considerations have been integrated into the Draft Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach. Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable</p>	None.



	<p>This shows an addition of AOS lands than what is highlighted in the SLO4 and there is a draft Masterplan of these lands indicating what could be possible. In this SLO4 it has been highlighted that the road from the N81 to Knockieran bridge and the Sporting Facilities to be developed before any of the residential areas and Blessington AFC would be in full agreement with this and would urge the planners to keep this within the LAP.</p> <p>This area of lands could become a community hub with the possibility of all these sporting facilities being developed here along with an area highlighted for a community centre, a public playground and parking for the greenway &amp; forestry walkway.</p>	<p>and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Eastern and Midland RSES and Wicklow County Development Plan. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input facilitates zoning that will help to avoid inappropriate development being permitted in areas of elevated sensitivity, such as in areas at risk of flooding or areas of elevated cultural/built heritage, landscape, water or ecological sensitivity.</p> <p>Lands at Santryhill and Haylands form Key Green Infrastructure (see Draft Plan Map No. 3), being part of an Ecological Corridor that provides functional connectivity for habitats and species and Local Biodiversity Areas (Santryhill and Haylands have been identified as sites of high local biodiversity value).</p> <p>The land use zoning provided at these lands is consistent with the ecological sensitivities present and higher-level objectives requiring the protection and management of ecological sensitivities.</p>	
--	--	--	--



Submission No.19. Ballymore Eustace Community Development Association			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions under a number of headings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wastewater &amp; The River Liffey</li> <li>• Joint LAP with Kildare County Council</li> <li>• Population Figures</li> <li>• Previous report by An Bord Pleanála</li> <li>• Surfacewater and Environmental Issues</li> </ul>	<p>The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the achievement of objectives under the headings laid out in the submission.</p> <p>The protection of water bodies and water quality, including drinking water sources, is provided for under various provisions from the Draft Plan and existing County Development Plan. This issue is also identified under other submissions and could be addressed in more detail in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>Available environmental baseline data has been used to inform the SEA, in compliance with the SEA Directive and taking into account the principles of subsidiarity and tiering in SEA. The findings of the SEA are included in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanies the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan has been informed by the SEA (and associated AA process) and is consistent with European and national legislation and policies on the protection and management of the environment.</p> <p>AA is being undertaken alongside the preparation and adoption of the Local Area Plan, in compliance with the European Habitats Directive. The AA Natura Impact Report that accompanied the Draft Local Area Plan on public display provides the findings of the AA thus far. The AA process is ongoing and will be concluded at adoption of the Local Area Plan. The AA NIR has been prepared in compliance with the European Habitats Directive and is appropriate to this strategic, Local Area Plan-level of decision making.</p> <p>Lands have been zoned under the Draft Plan in a manner that will ensure the appropriate protection of European sites. The zoning and associated provisions included in the Draft Plan have allowed the AA of NIR to conclude that: "...Having incorporated mitigation measures into the Draft Plan (including alignment with the mitigation measures integrated into the existing County Development Plan, as varied), it has been demonstrated that the Draft Plan is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects to any designated European site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects<sup>1</sup>...."</p>	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.



Submission No. 21. Ballymore Eustace Trout and Salmon Anglers' Association			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	Comments on the following text from Section 4.9 "Water" of the SEA Environmental Report: "The reservoir receives water from the River Liffey, at the northern end, and the Kings River, at the southern end. The exit is into the River Liffey gorge at the western end."	To amend text in the SEA ER.	To amend text in Section 4.9 "Water" of the SEA Environmental Report as follows (existing text in black, text to be deleted in <del>red-strikethrough</del> , text to be inserted in green):  "The reservoir receives water from the River Liffey, at the northern end, and the Kings River, at the southern end. The exit is <del>into the River Liffey gorge through the</del> at the western end of the reservoir <del>towards Golden Falls Reservoir.</del> "
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
B	Various other information and recommendations are provided for topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wastewater Treatment Capacity</li> <li>Blessington WWTP History</li> <li>Water supply</li> <li>Water Action Plan 2024</li> </ul>	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of these various recommendations, the amendments will inform updates to the SEA Environmental Report where relevant.</p> <p>Any amendments will also be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>	<p>To add the following text to Section 4.9 "Water" of the SEA Environmental Report as follows (text to be inserted in green):</p> <p>"As identified in Appendix I, the Water Action Plan 2024 is Ireland's third River Basin Management Plan and it outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters, and provide sustainable management of water resources. The Water Action Plan enhances and builds upon the work of the first and second-cycle plans. The Plan identifies stretches of the River Liffey, including at Ballymore Eustace, as Prioritised Areas for Action. These areas will be provided focuses action and collaboration by local, authorities, public bodies, and stakeholders as part of the implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle for implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Ireland."</p>



Submission No. 134. Eimear Deegan			
Item	Submission Text/Issues Raised	Response	Recommended Updates
A	<p>This submission provides information and suggestions under a number of headings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Transport Assessment / Transport Strategy Map</li> <li>• Active Travel Strategy Map</li> <li>• Strategic Environmental Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>The existing Wicklow County Development Plan and the Draft Local Area Plan include various provisions that will contribute towards the achievement of objectives under the headings laid out in the submission.</p> <p>With respect to information provided in the submission under “Strategic Environmental Assessment” the protection of water bodies and water quality, including drinking water sources, is provided for under various provisions from the Draft Plan and existing County Development Plan. This issue is also identified under other submissions and could be addressed in more detail in the Draft Plan.</p>	<p>If any amendments are proposed to the Draft Plan on foot of this submission, they will be screened for the need to undertake SEA and Stage 2 AA.</p>





# Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin Wicklow County Council



## **ADDENDUM I**

### **TO THE STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT**

#### **OF THE**

### **BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025**

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED MATERIAL  
AMENDMENTS TO THE  
DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN



## 1 Introduction

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the draft Blessington Local Area Plan was undertaken and prepared in accordance with *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* published in 2009 by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works (Flood Risk Guidelines).

The draft plan and associated reports, including the SFRA, were published in October 2024 and observations invited from the public and prescribed authorities. This 'Addendum I' to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 has been prepared on foot of submissions received, and sets out:

- (a) A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of any recommended Material Amendments to the Draft Plan, as set out in the Chief Executives Report. On completion of the consideration by the members of the CE's report, a final set of proposed material amendments to the Draft Plan may be agreed. This Addendum will be updated at that stage to include only an assessment of those proposed material amendments approved by the members;
- (b) Additional flood maps

It should be noted that changes are not made to the original Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report at this stage; this addendum forms part of the documentation of the ongoing SFRA/Plan-making process. It supplements and should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report published in October 2025.

## 2 Additional information regarding SFRA of the Draft Plan

Through the public consultation process, concerns were raised as follows:

- that 'overlay' maps were not provided or were not adequately clear, showing areas at risk of flooding (Flood risk A and B) overlaid with proposed zoning maps;
- that principle rivers and watercourses were not sufficiently clear, nor were locations of existing flood risk management infrastructure;
- insufficient information was provided regarding future climate change scenario flood risk

In order to address these concerns, additional maps are provided at the end of this document, as follows:

Map 1 Flood Risk Zones (Present day)

Map 2 Future Climate Change Scenario Flood Risk Zones

Map 3 Overlay of Flood Maps with Zoning Map

All maps will more clearly show watercourses and any flood pretention infrastructure.





### 3 Assessment of CE's recommended amendments

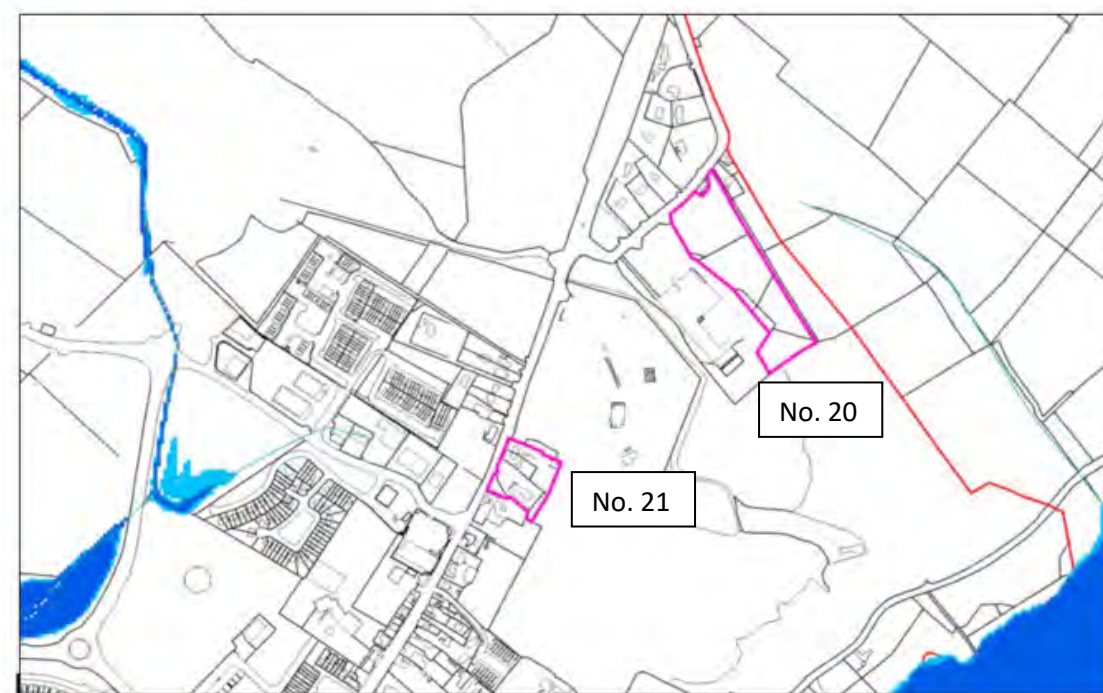
The purpose of this assessment is to identify and evaluate any locations proposed for new zoning or zoning changes that are located in flood risk zones.

The following proposed amendments relate to zoning changes<sup>1</sup>:

Amendment No.	Proposed land zoning change	Flood Zone	Requirement for Justification Test
20	OS2 - E	C	N
21	RE - TC	C	N

Map key:

	Flood Zone A
	Flood Zone B
	Subject sites



### 4 Conclusion

No further stages of assessment are required with respect to the CE proposed Amendments.

<sup>1</sup> See zoning key overleaf



## Zoning Key

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
<b>TC: Town Centre</b>	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including residential, retail, commercial, office and civic use.	To develop and consolidate the existing town centre to improve its vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure and residential uses, while delivering a quality urban environment, with emphasise on regeneration, infill town and historic centre conservation; ensuring priority for public transport where applicable, pedestrians and cyclists, while minimising the impact of private car based traffic and enhance and develop the existing centre's fabric.
<b>E: Employment</b>	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality employment and enterprise developments in a good quality physical environment.
<b>CE: Community &amp; Education</b>	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities	To facilitate the development of necessary community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure.
<b>OS2: Natural Areas</b>	To protect and enhance existing open, undeveloped lands	To protect, enhance and manage existing open, undeveloped lands that comprise flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, steep banks, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity.



**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**  
**Map No. 1**  
**Land Use Zoning**  
**Objectives**  
**(As Recommended)**



- LEGEND**
- Blessington Settlement Boundary
  - Specific Local Objectives
  - Road Objectives
  - AG - Agriculture
  - RN1 - New Residential - Priority 1
  - RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
  - RE - Existing Residential
  - TC - Town Centre
  - MU - Mixed Use
  - PU - Public Utility
  - CE - Community & Education
  - T - Tourism
  - AOS - Active Open Space
  - OS1 - Open Space
  - OS2 - Natural Areas
  - E - Employment
  - EX - Extractive Industry
  - Preferred Route Alignment N81
  - Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme

**Blessington (Co. Kildare)**

**Legend:**

- County Boundary
- Local Area Plan (LAP) Boundary
- Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) Boundary
- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Open Space & Amenity
- Community & Education
- Health / Community / Recreation
- Public Utility
- Employment
- Extractive Industry

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

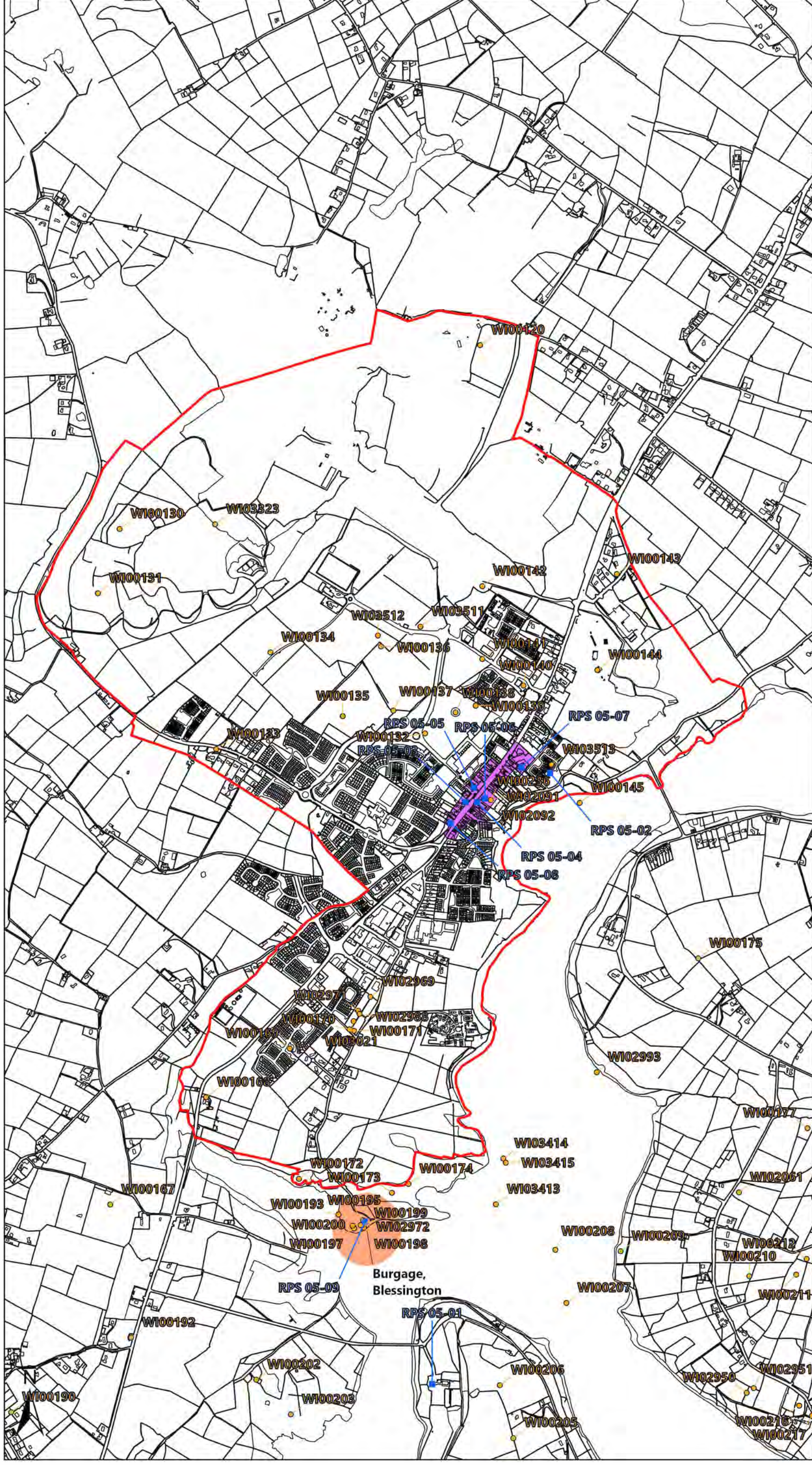
Scale NTS



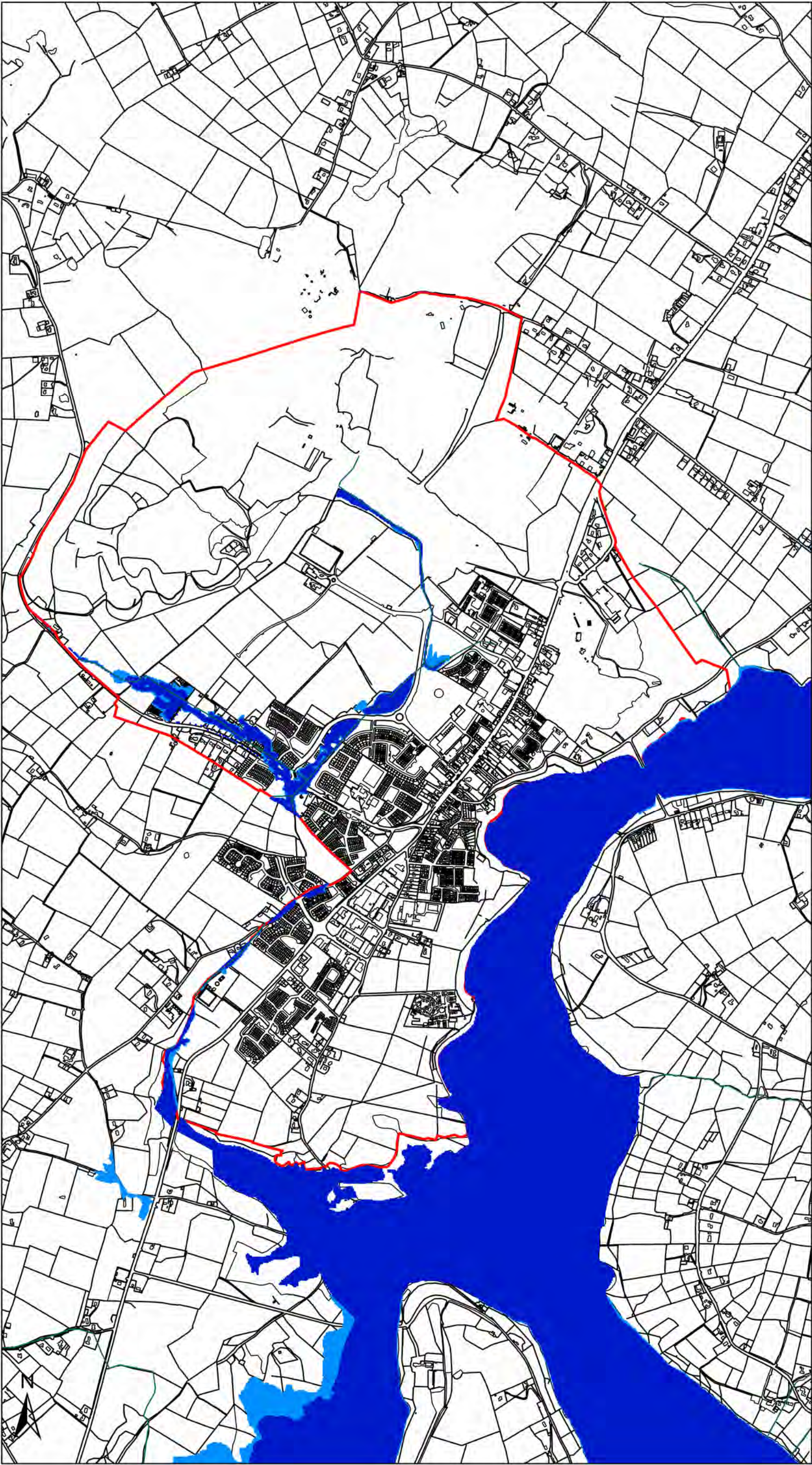


- LEGEND**
- Blessington Settlement Boundary
  - Record of Protected Structures
  - National Monuments
  - Architectural Conservation Areas
  - Areas of Archaeological Potential or Significant Potential

For additional information and data sources made available by the National Monuments Service and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, please visit [archaeology.ie](https://www.archaeology.ie)









**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 4A**  
**Flood Risk - Present Day**




**LEGEND**

 **Blessington Settlement Boundary**

 **Flood Zone A: High probability of flooding**

Where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding)

 **Flood Zone B: Moderate probability of flooding**

Where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding)

 **Wicklow Rivers**

**Disclaimer**

These indicative flood zones were based on information available at the time of drafting this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

Full Disclaimer is included in SFRA.

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**

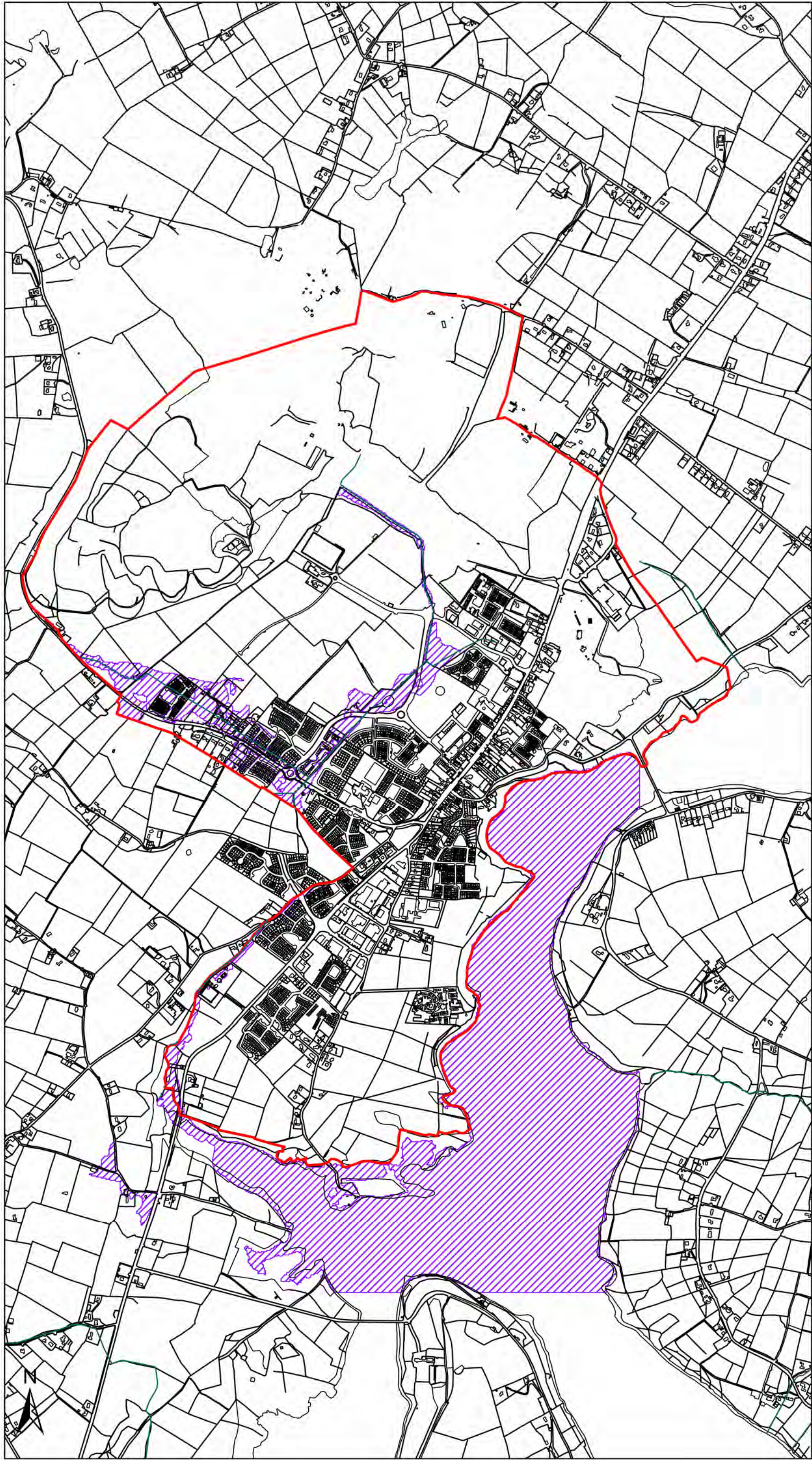


Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS








**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 4B**  
**Flood Risk - Potential**  
**Future Scenario**



**LEGEND**

-  **Blessington Settlement Boundary**
-  **Wicklow Rivers**
-  **Area of Potential Future Flood Risk**  
Area corresponding to a moderate risk of flooding (flood zone B) or greater under the CFRAM 'High End' future scenario and NCFHM 'High++' future scenario. For more information, refer to the Blessington Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and any accompanying addenda

**Disclaimer**

These indicative flood zones were based on information available at the time of drafting this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

Full Disclaimer is included in SFRA.

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS



**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**  
**Map No. 4C**  
**Flood Risk - Present Day**  
**& Recommended Land**  
**Use Zoning Objectives**



- LEGEND**
- Blessington Settlement Boundary
  - Specific Local Objectives
  - Road Objectives
  - AG - Agriculture
  - RN1 - New Residential - Priority 1
  - RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
  - RE - Existing Residential
  - TC - Town Centre
  - MU - Mixed Use
  - PU - Public Utility
  - CE - Community & Education
  - T - Tourism
  - AOS - Active Open Space
  - OS1 - Open Space
  - OS2 - Natural Areas
  - E - Employment
  - EX - Extractive Industry
  - Preferred Route Alignment N81
  - Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme
  - Flood Zone A: High Probability
  - Flood Zone B: Moderate Probability
  - Watercourses

- Blessington**  
**(Co. Kildare)**
- Legend**
- Existing Boundary
  - Local Area Plan Boundary
  - Blessington Local Area Plan (Co. Wicklow)
  - Existing Residential
  - New Residential
  - Open Space & Amenity
  - Community & Education
  - Roads / Cycleways / Footpaths
  - Watercourses
  - Local Area Plan Boundary
  - Local Area Plan Boundary
  - Local Area Plan Boundary

**Disclaimer**

These indicative flood zones were based on information available at the time of drafting this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

Full Disclaimer is included in SFRA.

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS



**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**  
**Map No. 4D**  
**Flood Risk - Potential**  
**Future Scenario &**  
**Recommended Land Use**  
**Zoning Objectives**



**LEGEND**

- Blessington Settlement Boundary
- Specific Local Objectives
- Road Objectives
- AG - Agriculture
- RN1 - New Residential - Priority 1
- RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2
- RE - Existing Residential
- TC - Town Centre
- MU - Mixed Use
- PU - Public Utility
- CE - Community & Education
- T - Tourism
- AOS - Active Open Space
- OS1 - Open Space
- OS2 - Natural Areas
- E - Employment
- EX - Extractive Industry
- Preferred Route Alignment N81
- Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme
- Watercourses
- Area of Potential Future Flood Risk

**Blessington**  
**(Co. Kildare)**

**Legend**

- Existing Boundary
- Local Area Plan Boundary
- Blessington Local Area Plan (Co. Wicklow)
- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Open Space & Amenity
- Community & Education
- Roads / Cycleways / Footpaths
- Watercourses
- Area of Potential Future Flood Risk
- Local Area Plan Boundary
- Local Area Plan Boundary

**Disclaimer**

These indicative flood zones were based on information available at the time of drafting this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

Full Disclaimer is included in SFRA.

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS



**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 5A**  
**Transport Strategy**



**LEGEND**

- Blessington Settlement Boundary
- Blessington Road Objectives
- Blessington Greenway
- Town Centre
- Amenity/Tourism Hub
- Potential Car Park Locations
- N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme
- N81 Preferred Route Corridor
- Arterial Streets
- Link Streets
- Local Streets
- Potential Traffic Management Locations
- Specific Local Objectives
- Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme
- Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme
- Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme

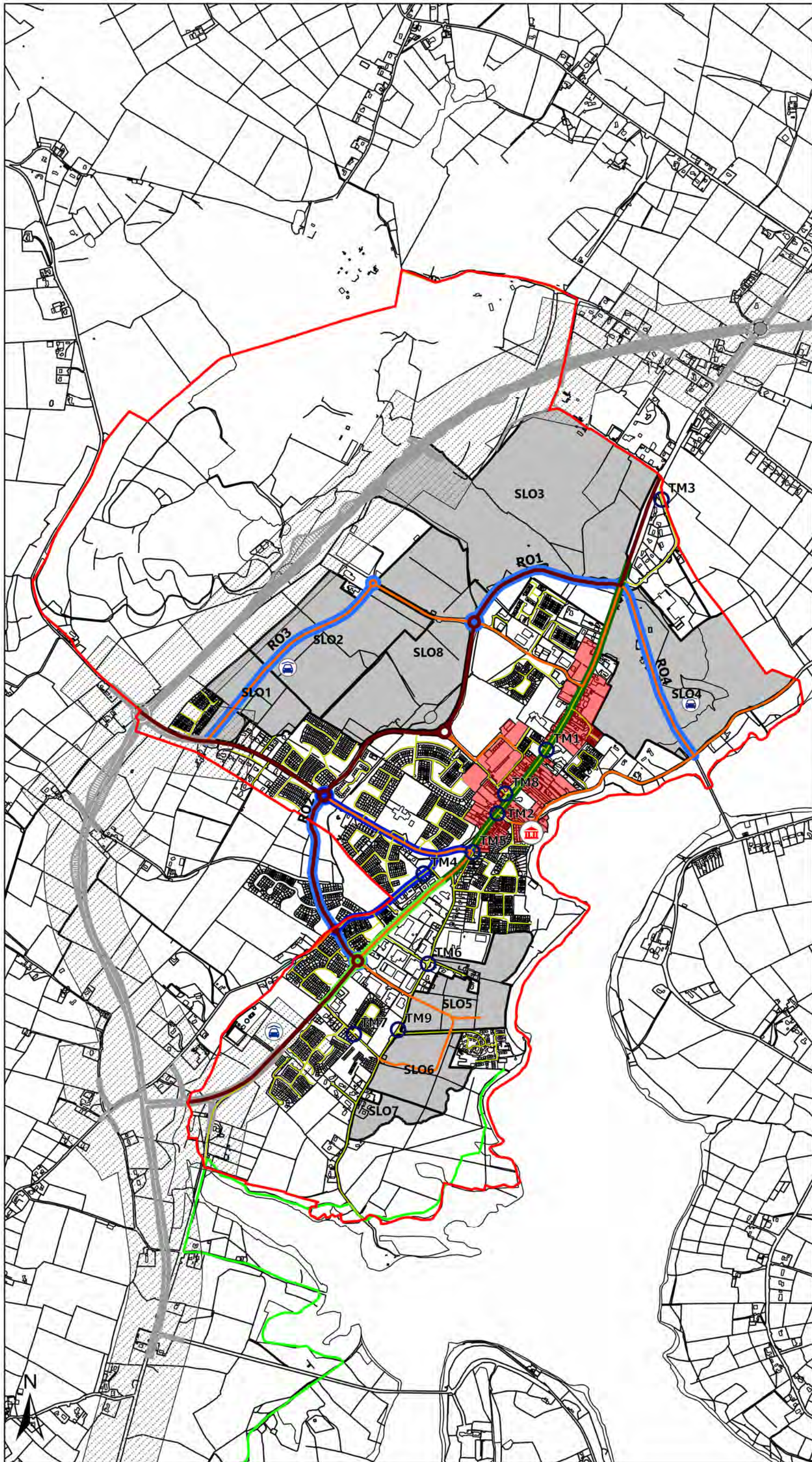
**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS







**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 5B**  
**Transport Strategy -**  
**Opportunity Sites**



- LEGEND**
- Blessington Settlement Boundary
  - Blessington Road Objectives
  - Blessington Greenway
  - Amenity/Tourism Hub
  - Potential Car Park Locations
  - N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme
  - N81 Preferred Route Corridor
  - Arterial Streets
  - Link Streets
  - Local Streets
  - Potential Traffic Management Locations
  - Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme
  - Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme
  - Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme
  - Specific Local Objectives
  - Opportunity Sites

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS



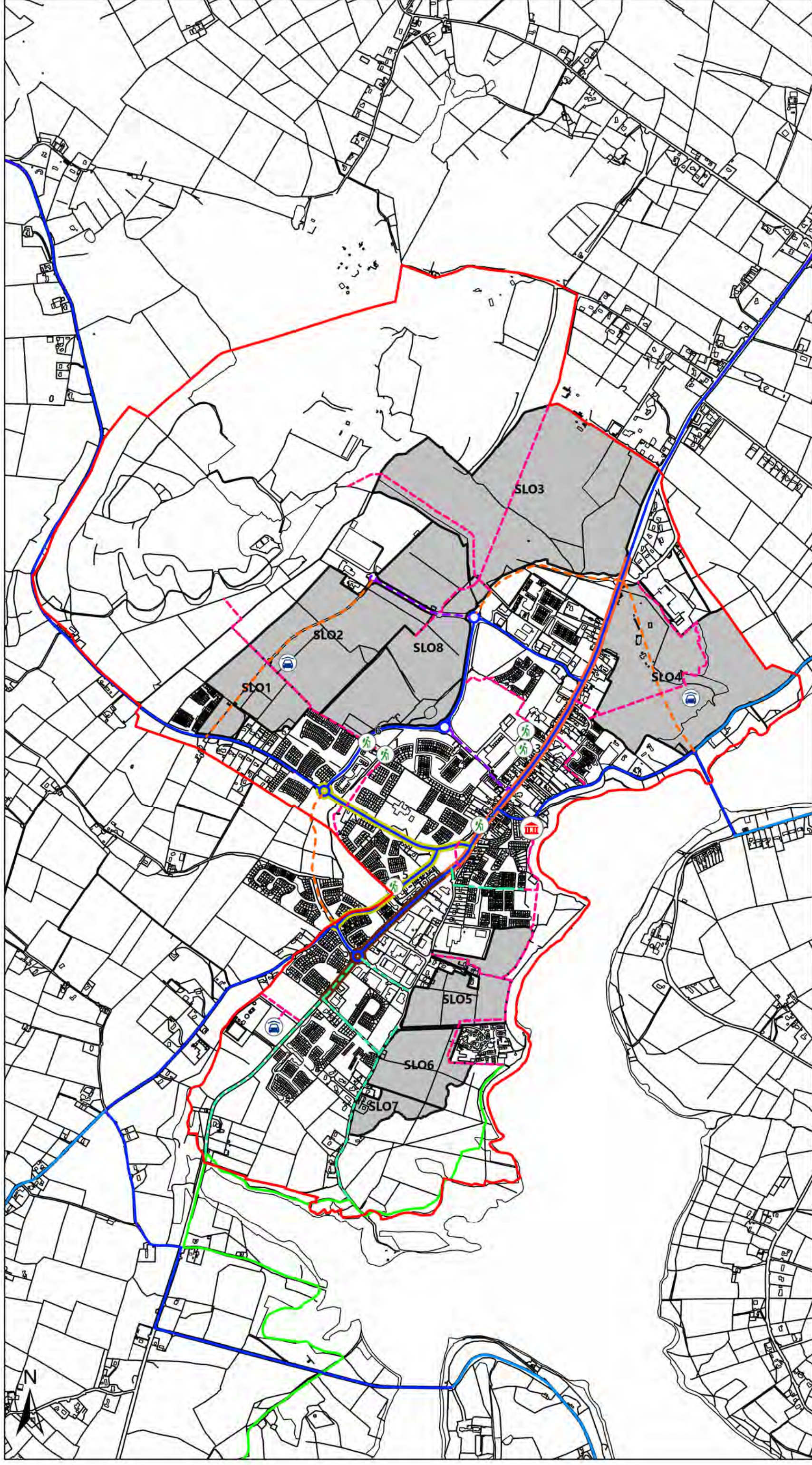
**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 6A**  
**Active Travel Strategy**



**LEGEND**

- Blessington Settlement Boundary
- GDA Secondary Route
- GDA Interurban Route
- Blessington Greenway
- Local Greenway/Lakeside Amenity Feeder
- Local General Feeder
- Local General Feeder to be delivered by road objective
- Indicative Pedestrian/Cyclist Routes (Greenfield/Brownfield)
- Amenity/Tourism Hub
- Potential Car Park Locations
- Potential Permeability Improvement Locations
- Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme
- Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme
- Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme
- Specific Local Objectives



**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**

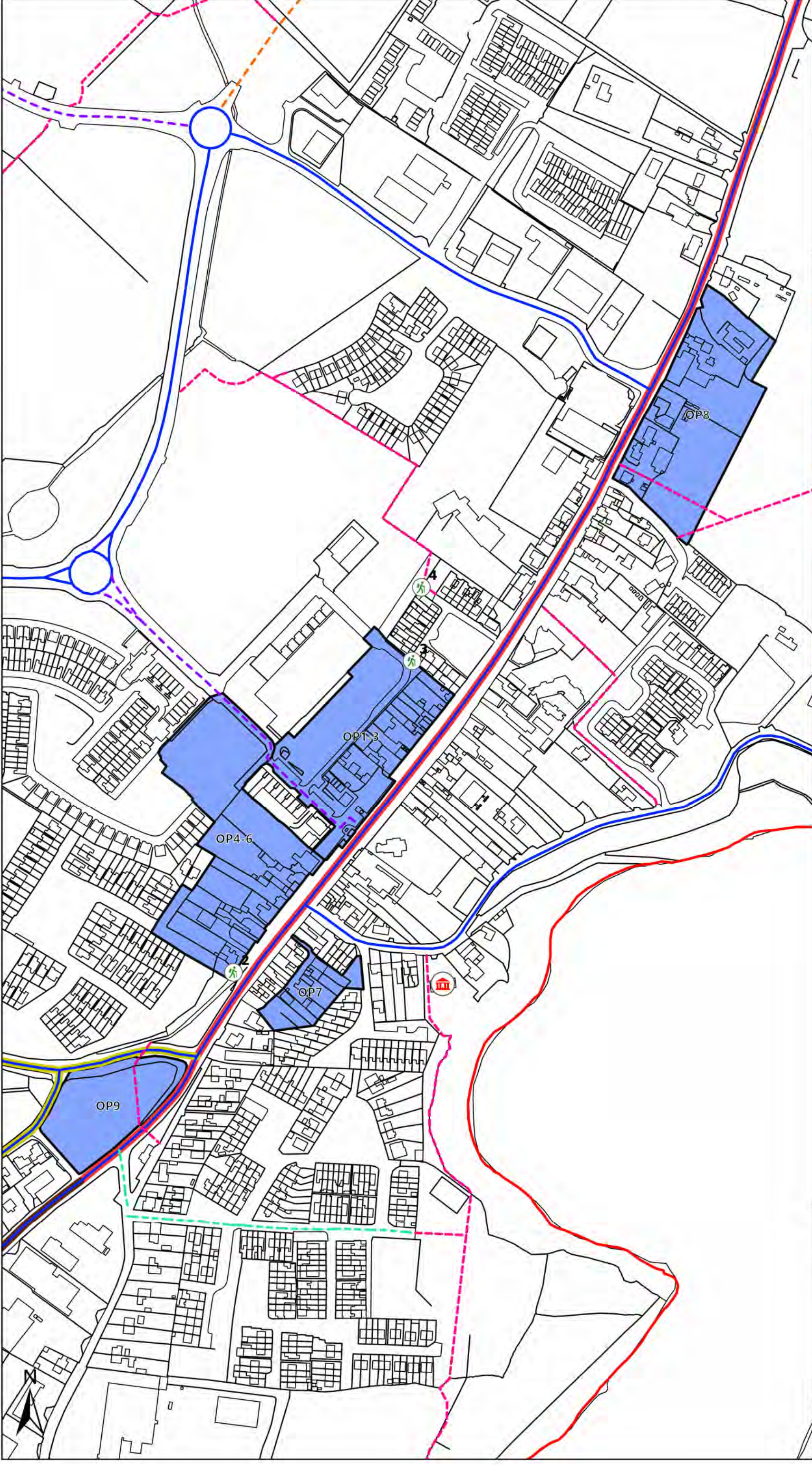


Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved  
Licence number 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS





- LEGEND**
-  Blessington Settlement Boundary
  -  GDA Secondary Route
  -  GDA Interurban Route
  -  Blessington Greenway
  -  Local Greenway/Lakeside Amenity Feeder
  -  Local General Feeder
  -  Local General Feeder to be delivered by road objective
  -  Indicative Pedestrian/Cyclist Routes (Greenfield/Brownfield)
  -  Amenity/Tourism Hub
  -  Potential Permeability Improvement Locations
  -  Potential Car Park Locations
  -  Blessington Gateway Road Safety Improvement Scheme
  -  Blessington Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvement Scheme
  -  Blessington Main Street N81 Road Safety Improvement Scheme
  -  Opportunity Sites