



## Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Group
Name:	Blessington AFC
Reference:	DBLESSLAP-204711
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### Topic

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

### Submission

We at Blessington AFC would urge the planners to zone further lands AOS for sporting facilities and to maintain the current areas in the current Draft LAP earmarked for soccer facilities and playing pitches as they are urgently needed within the town.

We would also appreciate the planners help in facilitating the proposals outlined in our submission. This would help the soccer club and numerous other clubs in the town garner the much needed amenities they all require.

### File

Blessington AFC - Blessington LAP 2025 Submission 10.12.24.pdf, 0.97MB

# Blessington AFC



## Blessington LAP Submission



## **Club Information**

Blessington AFC is a volunteer run soccer club for the community & surrounding areas of Blessington town to allow a suitable and safe environment for players of all ages and ability thrive in football. Our aim as a club is to instil a sense of identity and belonging in our community, while allowing our members to enjoy the many benefits team sports bring including physical & mental health, interpersonal skills, friendship and much more.

Blessington AFC was founded in 1968 and since then have struggled for facilities within the town. Currently based outside the town in the neighbouring county of Kildare which are not accessible for pedestrians or cyclists for our 800 members. We have a number of years left on our lease for our current facilities but have almost outgrown these lands and could do with further pitches within the town for our ever-growing number of members. The committee and all its members would urge the planners to offer any advantage in land zoning that the club can get to develop amenities within the town.

## **Introduction**

Blessington AFC would firstly like to thank the planners for their time and hard work in the creation of this draft LAP and would fully agree with the majority of the LAP.

There are some recommendations that the club would like addressed in the LAP which is the significant decrease in the areas of lands zoned AOS. The lands that are zoned AOS in the Draft Zoning Map are also 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.

So, the 800+ members of the soccer club would urge the planners to zone further lands AOS for increased opportunities to attain sporting facilities.

This should include further lands earmarked for soccer facilities as the club have currently outgrown our current location at Crosschapel with pitches being overused throughout the year and not being able to accommodate all our teams.

The local GAA club have outgrown there facilities also and have 3 pitches, soon to have 2 clubhouses and an astro pitch with roughly 200 less members than the soccer club. This shows the urgent need for soccer facilities within the town and this can only be done by the planners making sure that lands are zoned for these much-needed facilities.

Regarding the SLO2 & SLO4 in the written statement, we would agree that the sports facilities should be developed first before any residential development. We ask for these objectives to remain in the LAP as per the below images.

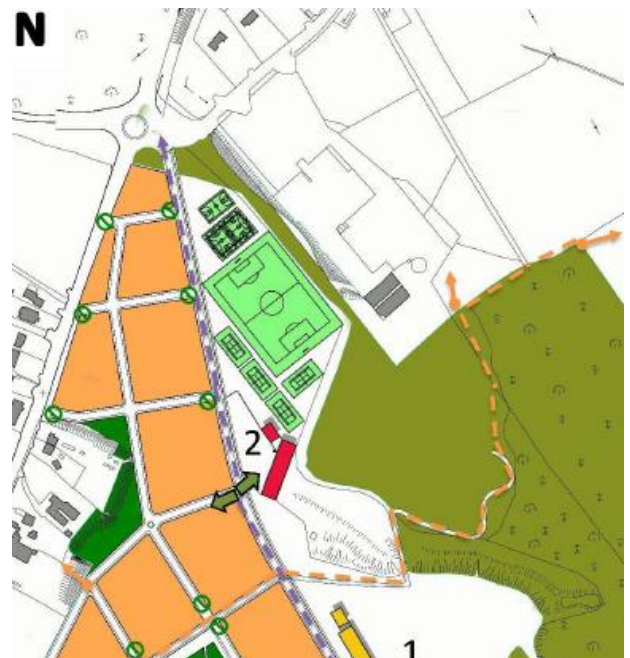
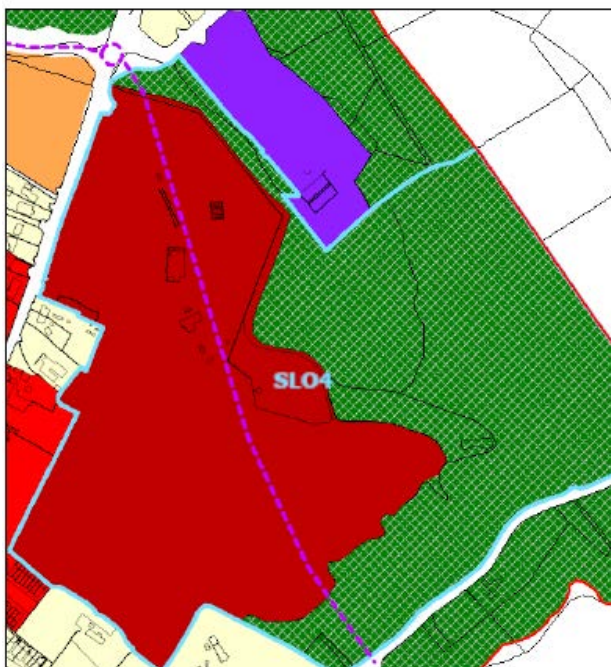


Figure B.8.2: Specific Local Objective 2

## Recommendation 1

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.

**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.



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.

The following facilities could be implemented on these lands which would benefit 4 or 5 different clubs within the town.

- A multi-sport astro turf pitch with running track
- Soccer and Rugby pitches
- External and Internal full-size Basketball courts
- Paddle Courts
- Parking – For the Greenway and for the many organised runs throughout the year

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.

## **Recommendation 2**

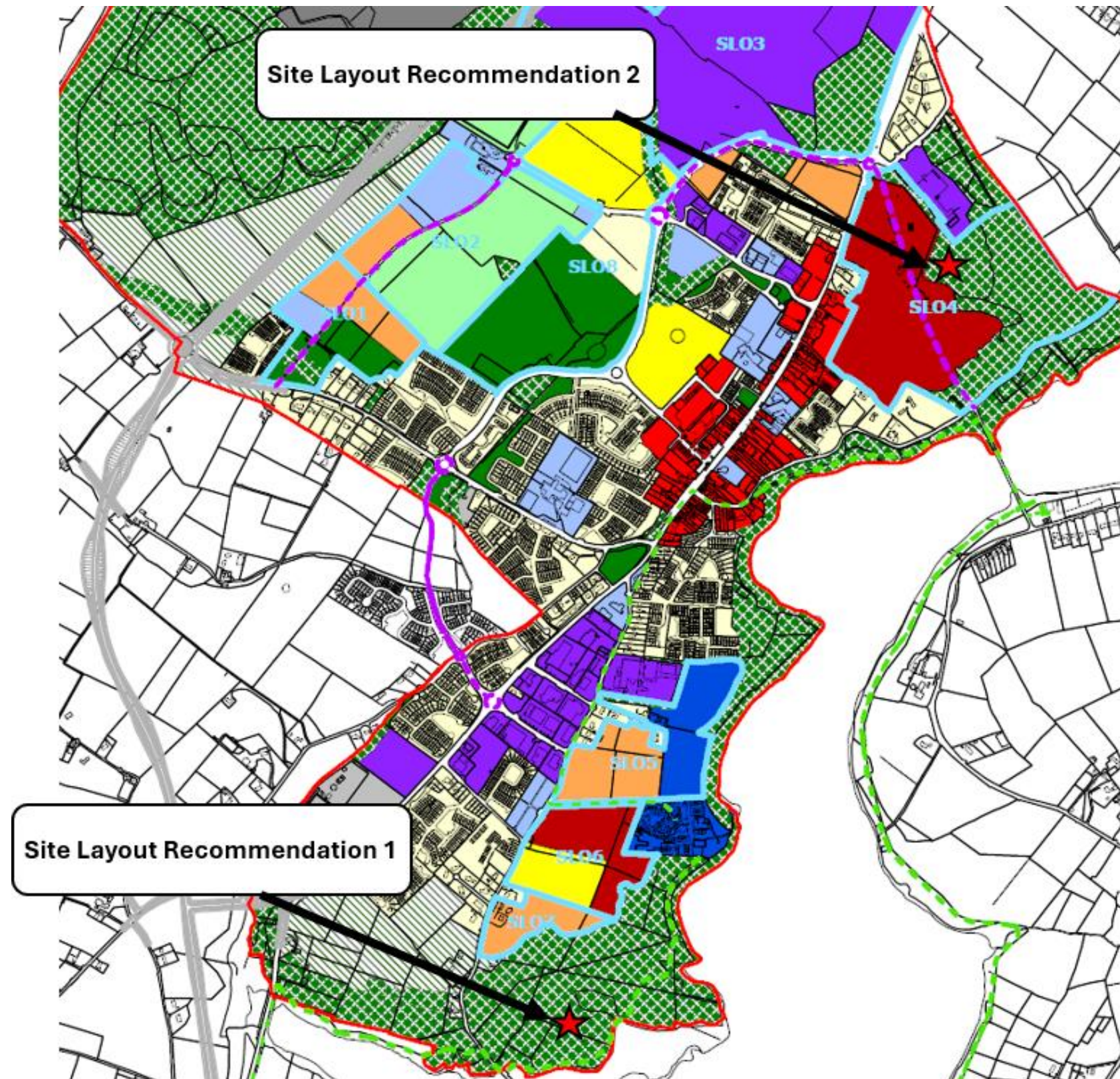
Blessington AFC would like to make the submission for the lands at Haylands or Doran's Pit as per **Site Layout Recommendation 2** to be zoned AOS.

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.

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 & forestry walkway.

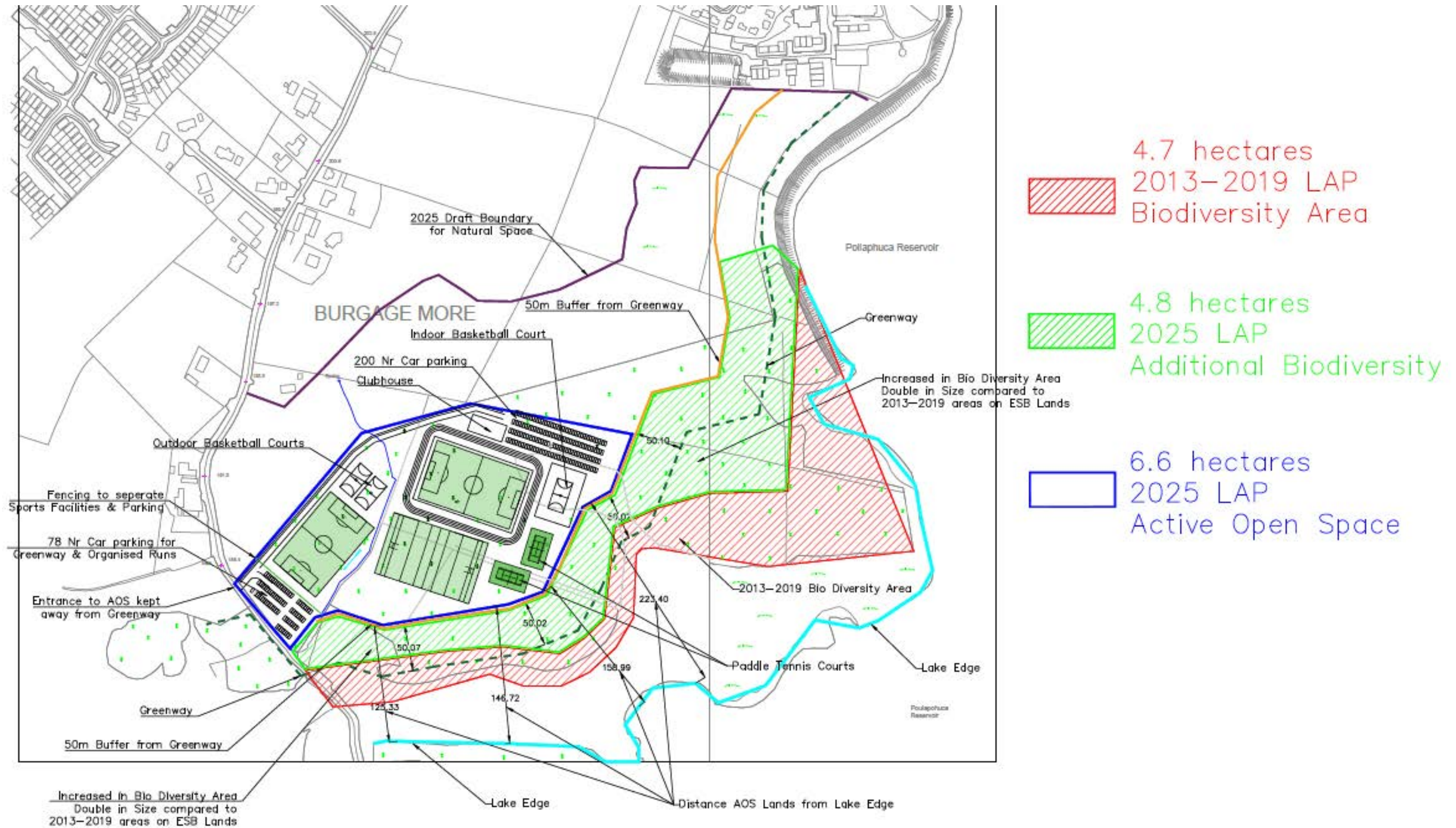


## Overall Location Map – Site Recommendations





## Site Layout Recommendation 1





## Site Layout Recommendation 2



Haylands  
17.95 hectares of  
Natural Open Space &  
Open Space in the  
2025 Draft LAP.

Proposal for 14.85  
hectares of Natural  
Open Space & 6  
hectares of AOS.

Increased area of  
AOS which is much  
needed while  
retaining of Natural  
Corridors including  
the addition of two  
forest walkways.

-  Biodiversity Area
-  6 hectares  
Active Open Space  
Multi Sports Complex
-  Forest Walkway
-  Tourism Area
-  Multidisciplinary  
Community Centre
-  Greenway & Forest  
Loop Walkway  
Parking

## **Conclusion**

The Draft LAP overall is very well completed by the planners, but the above recommendations should be considered and changed for the adopted LAP.

The previous Draft LAP for 2013-2019 did not change when it was adopted. If submissions can be made at this stage, they should be taken into consideration if they can improve the 2025 LAP which is to be adopted.

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 and to utilise the above proposals along with these objectives.

Overall, if the above recommendations were taken into account for the LAP and everything else was to remain the same the total area of AOS lands would then still be reduced from the 2013 – 2019 LAP so these recommendations are very much needed.

The 1500+ members of the local clubs with no facilities would appreciate the planner's full attention in the adjustment to the LAP as per the above proposals.