

BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA PLAN

HAVE YOUR SAY

ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR AREA

Wicklow County Council will be preparing a new Local Area Plan for Blessington. A consultation website is now available for you to access which sets out the key topics that the new plan will address and allows you to make a submission. You are invited to go through the topics, browse the sample questions, view maps and give us your views and ideas.

www.wicklow.ie



HOUSING – POPULATION – COMPACT GROWTH



Blessington will need approximately 474 new homes built between 2022 and 2031.

To facilitate compact growth, 30% of new homes need to be in the existing built up area and town centre.

Wicklow County Council are required to identify and reserve an appropriate amount of land in the best locations to meet this housing target.

These homes must be provided for in a sustainable manner, aligning with the provisions of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, and having regard to established and sustainable settlement patterns and the natural environment.

**Sample Questions,
All Ideas are
Welcomed**

Where should higher densities be located? How do we deliver higher densities?

Where do we deliver our new housing without contributing to urban sprawl?

What sites in the town could be redeveloped to maximise opportunities?

Where are the vacant or underutilised sites in the settlement? How can the plan(s) maximise use of these sites?

REGENERATION OF COMMUNITIES & PLACES - HEALTHY PLACEMAKING - URBAN DESIGN - OPPORTUNITY SITES



The local area plan will focus on regeneration in order to achieve more vibrant and sustainable communities. As well as identifying opportunities for development that can give new purpose and function to existing places, sites and buildings, there is a need to address the evolving needs of communities, in response to demographic and lifestyle changes, as well as addressing such issues as overdevelopment, decline, etc.

The local area plan will promote healthy placemaking through quality urban design, public realm and active travel, which in turn helps create a healthy environment for healthy communities to grow.

The regeneration of vacant sites has the potential to improve the vitality and viability of the traditional town centre and environs, in particular the regeneration of back land sites to the rear of properties along Blessington Main Street and lands formerly or currently involved in quarrying operations.

How can we revitalise / regenerate the following areas -

- Blessington Main Street
- Blessington Town Centre
- Quarry Lands

**Sample Questions,
All Ideas are
Welcomed**

What urban design standards should apply in Blessington?

What are the unique features of Blessington's urban environment that should inform future policy?

Where do you see potential to enhance the public realm in Blessington?

Are there any areas/ vacant buildings you would like to see redeveloped/ regenerated? What uses and design would you like to see?

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY – TOURISM - SHOPS & SERVICES - COMMUNITY FACILITIES –



Economic development and the creation of employment opportunities are fundamental to the creation of sustainable communities.

The role of the local area plan is focused on land use objectives and zoning land, however these are essential elements that can support economic and tourism development.

Wicklow's 'Local Economic & Community Plan' and 'County Tourism Strategy' address a wide range of issues around delivering employment and tourism actions, such as encouraging new employers to locate in the county, marketing, training, financial support, etc.

It is important to protect the traditional role of the town/village centres as the primary retailing and business core, while also facilitating their expansion.

There is a need to ensure that there is enough land zoned within the settlement to meet the projected future educational, community, sport and recreational uses, in order to meet needs of the future population.

While the area is serviced with schools, community facilities, sport and recreational facilities, the enhancement of these services may be required to accommodate the level of future growth envisaged.

The expansion of the Blessington Greenway around the Poulaphouca Reservoir presents a significant opportunity for recreation and tourism in the locality. This will be in excess of 35km and will contain car-parks, toilets, and refreshment facilities.

**Sample Questions,
All Ideas are Welcomed**

What can be done to increase the amount of jobs within the settlement?

Are all of the tourism assets (e.g Blessington Lakes, Glen Ding Forest) in the settlement fully exploited?

What new education, community, sport and recreation facilities are needed and where should they be located?

What is needed to improve the town of Blessington?

What is needed in Blessington to maximise the opportunities that may arise from the planned expansion to the Blessington Greenway?

- HERITAGE - BIODIVERSITY - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE - CLIMATE ACTION – ENERGY



The Blessington area has a rich variety of built and natural heritage. The protection and enhancement of the area's natural and built assets is key to the future development of the town in a sustainable manner.

The local area plan has a key role in climate action by including measures to adapt to climate change and transitioning to a low carbon and climate resilient town.

The local area plan will promote sustainable settlement and transport-led development strategies, in particular in relation to the location, layout and design of development.

The local area plan will also include an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions.

Management of areas prone to flooding will also be addressed in the new local area plan.

**Sample
Questions,
All Ideas are
Welcomed**

How do we continue to develop the area while protecting and enhancing its natural heritage and biodiversity?

Are there any additional buildings, places, trees, views etc worthy of protection in the area?

Are there any 'green corridors' you would like to see enhanced?

When it comes to land use, what are the key actions we can take to reduce the impacts of climate change?

How can the Plan address flood risk and build resilience to better cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events?

- INFRASTRUCTURE - SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT - TRANSPORTATION



The provision of adequate infrastructure is critical to facilitate and sustain growth. It is acknowledged that Blessington is served by transport infrastructure including Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, and Local Link services. These services provide connections of varying frequencies to Dublin City Centre, Naas/Sallins, Wicklow Town/Arklow and Baltinglass/Tullow.

The continued improvement of the local transportation network, including the provision of footpaths, cycle lanes, traffic management proposals, etc, are important considerations for incorporation into the plan.

The provision and operation of water, waste, energy and telecommunications services infrastructure is a key element in supporting economic growth and providing a satisfactory quality of life for existing and future residents within the area.

This infrastructure also plays a significant role in sustaining environmental quality in the area.

**Sample
Questions,
All Ideas are
Welcomed**

What are the key transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors?

What are the issues to overcome in moving from the private car to public transport or walking and cycling?

Are there any services infrastructure issues in the area?

- OTHER TOPICS FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON!



- Environmental Assessment

As part of the LAP preparation process the Council is required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment Screening (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The purposes of these assessments are to ensure that the environmental consequences of the objectives of the plan are assessed during the plan process.

- Plan Implementation and Delivery

The Planning Authority reviews the implementation and delivery of the plan objectives. With regard to the actual delivery of the plan objectives, the local area plan influences strategic and local investment in infrastructure and services by the public and private sector. With the public sector, in a plan-led system, Project Ireland 2040 aligns capital investment with the local area plan's strategies.

- Any Other Issue

Is there any other issue you would like to see addressed in the Local Area Plan?

**Sample Questions,
All Ideas are
Welcomed**

Do you have any issues / comments you wish to be considered in the preparation of the SEA/ AA / SFRA that will accompany the draft LAP?

Do you have any other issues you wish to be taken in to consideration in the drafting of the local area plan?

RELEVANT INFORMATION

What is the Blessington Local Area Plan?

The local area plan is the main public statement of planning policies for the local community. It sets out the objectives of the planning authority for the development of land. It includes objectives for land use zoning, infrastructure, community facilities, design and environmental / heritage protection. The plan consists of a written statement and a series of maps, including the land use zoning map for the area.

Who makes the plan?

The making of the plan is a function reserved for the Elected Members (i.e. councillors) of the Planning Authority. It is their duty to adopt the plan with the technical help of their officials (the Chief Executive, planners, engineers etc.). The plan is to be prepared in consultation with the public and statutory consultees.

How does the plan affect me?

The plan is the main blueprint for planning decisions in your area. For example, it sets out where potential new roads and community facilities can be provided and it zones land for particular purposes (housing, shopping, schools, industry, etc.). This will affect what type of buildings can be constructed and the use to which land can be put. It affects many facets of daily economic and social life – where you can live, what services are available and where developments with job opportunities are to be sited.

How does the plan affect planning applications?

All planning applications are measured against the local area plan to assess their conformity with the plan's objectives. Proposed development must normally be in accordance with the plan in order to be permitted.

What is the effect of zoning?

When land is zoned for a particular type of development in the plan, this is a clear indication that a proposed development for this form of development may be granted. Zoning may also indicate restrictions on development (e.g. number of houses per hectare, certain types of industry only etc.) and permitted development will be limited accordingly.

What is Wicklow County Council's big picture 'strategy' for the development of Blessington?

Healthy Placemaking - Climate Action - Economic Opportunity - are the three overarching cross-cutting themes that inform and shape all aspects of the County Development Plan 2022 -2028. These three themes will form the basis for the Blessington Local Area Plan.

The County Wicklow 'Core Strategy' and 'Settlement Strategy' which are contained in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022- 2028 sets out the following strategy and objectives for the future development of Blessington:

+ Blessington is designated as a Level 3, 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' within the Core Region; a strong and active town that acts as the service centre for a wide rural catchment in counties Wicklow, Kildare, and Dublin.

+ Blessington 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 served by a bus service including Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann services.

+ There is a population allocation of c. 6,145 persons for 2028 (from a population of c. 5,234 persons in 2016).

+ There is a housing growth target of c. 474 from 2022 to 2031.

+ Having regard to its strategic location, there is a particular opportunity for the expansion of 'product' based employment facilities in the town. There is potential to foster economic links with Newbridge, Naas and Kilcullen, and to take advantage of their accessibility to the M9 and south western transport corridor.

+ Blessington is designated a Level 3 Town and/or District Centre & Sub-County Town Centre in the Mid-East area in the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

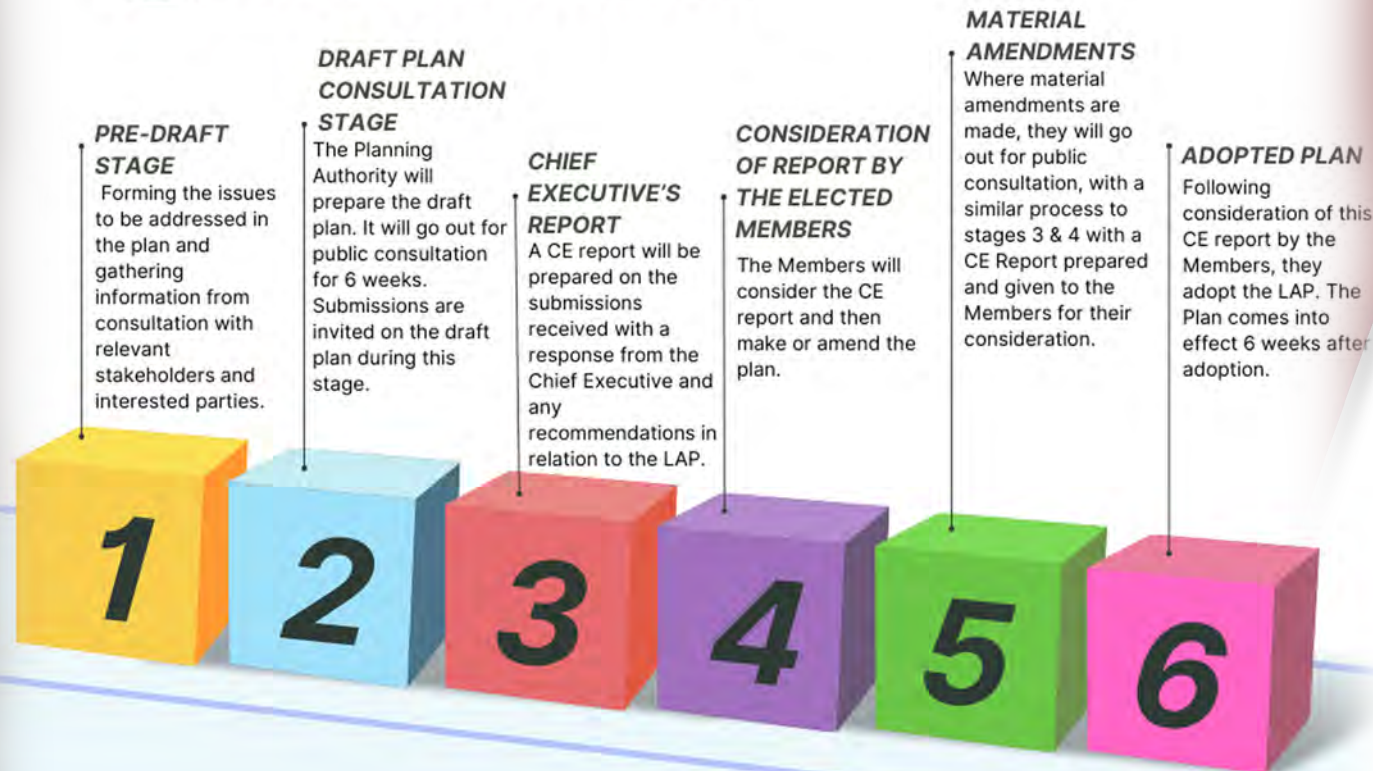
+ Phase 1 of the Blessington Greenway (6.5km) has been completed and links the town of Blessington with Russborough House. The next phase of Blessington Greenway will complete the route around the entirety of Poulaphouca Reservoir. This will be in excess of 35km and will contain car-parks, toilets, and refreshment facilities. Work on the greenway is intended to be completed within the lifetime of this plan.

+ It is intended to realign the current route of the N81 to the west of the town. In the short term the priority shall be the completion of the partly constructed inner relief road in conjunction with Kildare County Council.

+ During the lifetime of this plan, the Council will strive to reclaim and reassert the Main Street as a place for people rather than as a through route for vehicular traffic.

LOCAL AREA PLAN PROCESS

6 KEY STAGES IN THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS





MAKE A SUBMISSION

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in any of the topics here or have any other ideas for Blessington, you are invited to **HAVE YOUR SAY**, before Wednesday 3rd April 2024, in one of the following ways:

a) Through the consultation portal - Make a submission on any of the topics and/or attach a document. You can also send in a submission as an attachment without having to answer any of the questions. scan the QR below or log on to <https://blessington-wicklow.hub.arcgis.com/>

or

b) Write to: 'Blessington LAP', Administrative Officer, Planning Department, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow A67 FW96

You are also invited to a drop-in **PUBLIC INFORMATION DAY**, with the plan team, on Friday 1st March 2024 in The Coimín Centre, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow W91 F77F from 10.00 to 13.00 and then from 16.00 – 19.00.

The plan team are also available by phone during the consultation period. Phone No. (0404) 20148 (during normal office hours)

Submissions must be in writing and only make your submission in **ONE** format. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions can be made until **Wednesday 3rd April 2024**

