



# Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

<b>Who are you:</b>	Group
<b>Name:</b>	Blessington Rugby Football Club
<b>Email Address:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Reference:</b>	BLESSLAP-000639
<b>Submission Made</b>	April 3, 2024 12:10 AM

## Topic

Economic Opportunity - Tourism - Shops & Services - Community Facilities

## Submission

Please find attached.

## File

Blessington LAP - BRFC.pdf, 0.12MB

Planning Department  
Wicklow County Council  
County Buildings.  
Whitegates.  
Wicklow Town.  
A67 FW96



Re: Blessington Local Area Plan Consultation

2 April 2024

For the attention of the Councilors and Officials,

The Blessington Rugby Football Club (Blessington RFC) welcomes the opportunity to submit the Local Area Plan consultation for Blessington being undertaken by Wicklow County Council.

The Blessington RFC was established in 2016 by three parents in Blessington to provide a local rugby opportunity for Blessington and kids across West Wicklow. The club relied on St Kevin's Community Hall to host us during our first year with 16 players. We have grown from the grassroots up from tots to an u15s team. Our girl's u12s and U14s teams have been developing with now 51 female players. Our membership has grown to over 300 players, coaches, and volunteers during the past eight years. The membership is from West Wicklow – Dunlavin, Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lacken, Vallemount and, of course, Blessington. Blessington RFC is a club of the Leinster Rugby and the only such in West Wicklow.

### **Importance of Sports in the Community**

The Local Area Plan should reflect the objectives of the National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027, as per *RPO 9.15 Local authorities shall support the vision and objectives of the National Sports Policy, including working with local sports partnerships, clubs, communities and partnerships within and beyond sport, to increase sport and physical activity participation levels locally.*

There is a particular opportunity to address the objectives: *Increased Participation: A significantly higher proportion of Irish children and adults from all sectors of society are regularly involved in all forms of active and social participation in sport.*

- Elimination of active sport participation gradient between men and women
- Increased number of children regularly playing sport
- Increased number of adults regularly involved socially in sport through volunteering, club membership and/or attendance

As well as the *Improved Capacity* – the goal of Quality of facility infrastructure.

Additionally, the National Sports Policy states that “investment for multipurpose spaces in the community (e.g., community centres, libraries, and sports clubs) for a variety of activities, including leisure, community, cultural, and service provision”.



### **Need for Quality Sports Infrastructure**

On the Local Area Plan consultation website, we note that it states that “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.” In the experience of Blessington RFC and other sports groups we’ve been working with, the infrastructure currently is insufficient and has required much goodwill to fit around other activities. Therefore, we believe that the above statement needs to be corrected and that the Local Area Plan reflect the need to address this deficit in the context of the National Sport Policy goals as well as in the context of the LAP outlines that Blessington will require an additional 474 new homes to be constructed from 2022 to 2031.

### **Opportunities**

Blessington RFC believes there is opportunity in the land zoning policy, for example, as identified by others at the lands near the Avon. Whether it is this land parcel or another is a matter for the Council and Councilors; what is clear is the opportunity provided by the existence of the available lands and the multiple sports bodies in Blessington willing to work towards a shared solution. Blessington RFC, working with these bodies, would welcome the opportunity to create a multi-use sports facility for Blessington's benefit. It would help Wicklow County Council work towards the County Development Plan and National Policy.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute further to this at a later stage in the development of the Local Area Plan.

Kind regards,

*Patrick King  
Hon Secretary  
Blessington Rugby Football Club*