



Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

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Submission to the Blessington Local Area Plan

I wish to submit the following points and proposals for consideration in the development of the Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP). The aim of this submission is to enhance the quality of life for Blessington's residents, support local businesses, and accommodate the town's continued growth in a sustainable and efficient manner.

1. Development of a Swimming Pool and Multi-Use Sports Complex

Proposal: The development of a swimming pool and multi-use sports complex, including soccer pitches, rugby pitches, and a running track, should be included in the LAP.

Rationale: The Blessington community is expanding, with local sports clubs such as Blessington Soccer Club, Blessington Rugby Club, and the Lakeshore Striders Running Club growing in popularity. However, there are insufficient facilities to meet the needs of these growing clubs.

Location: The Council-owned land beside the Avon in Blessington is an ideal location for this development.

Benefits: The multi-use sports complex will provide shared facilities such as changing rooms, car parking, and training areas, fostering a sense of community while meeting the needs of various local sports.

2. Zoning of Land for Public Amenities

Proposal: Zoning of land for the development of a swimming pool, multi-use sports complex, and additional open space around Blessington.

Rationale: The addition of "open space" zoning will support the development of green spaces, leisure areas, and recreational facilities, improving the quality of life for residents.

3. Housing and Urban Development

Proposal:

Housing: Ensure sufficient land is zoned for housing, with emphasis on the development of houses closer to the town center (e.g., Doran's Pit).

Vacant Sites: Prioritize the utilization of vacant buildings before introducing new housing projects.

Road Access: Prioritize the upgrading of road infrastructure to ensure safe and efficient access to new housing developments.

Rationale: Blessington has a growing population, and housing developments must be planned to meet demand while avoiding urban sprawl.

4. Infrastructure Improvements

Parking:

Propose the development of additional parking in new estates to prevent congestion and illegal parking on main roads.

New car parks are needed at locations such as Burgage Cemetery and Avon Ri.

Roads and Access:

An upgrade of the N81 is needed to improve connectivity.

Completion of the inner relief road.

Regular pothole maintenance and improvements to smaller roads.

Transportation:

Improved bus service and upgrade the bus services connecting Blessington with nearby towns such as Naas, Newbridge, and Dunlavin.

Improved cycle paths around the town, connecting Blessington to surrounding areas, encouraging non-motorized transport.

More pedestrian crossings are needed, especially on the N81 near the Texaco garage, to improve safety for children and pedestrians.

5. Town Centre Strategy and Retail Enhancement

Proposal:

Implement paid parking with a free 1-2 hour period to support local businesses.

Create a dedicated Park-and-Ride facility to reduce congestion.

Increase the width of footpaths and introduce proper cycle lanes around schools and main streets.

Develop pedestrianization of the Town Square and rebranding of vacant sites as outlined in the Town Centre First Plan.

Rationale: These measures will improve traffic flow, support the retail economy, and make the town centre more walkable.

6. Economic Development and Tourism

Proposal:

Attract businesses by improving transportation links and connectivity, particularly with local universities and nearby towns.

Develop additional accommodation options, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, and Airbnbs.

Upgrade the bridges on the lake in collaboration with the ESB.

Enhance tourism through historical walks, highlighting Blessington's rich history, and developing Glending Forest as a walking destination.

Establish a Tourist Information Centre and include Blessington in the Wicklow Tourism Action Plan.

7. Social Infrastructure

Childcare:

Additional creches are needed to accommodate the growing population.

Schools:

Prioritize the development of the new 1000 student secondary school without delay and also zone land for a second secondary school.

Health Services:

A new doctors' surgery or additional doctors should be provided to meet the demands of the growing community .

8. Cemeteries and Public Amenities

Proposal:

Additional land is needed for an extension to the cemetery.

Develop car parking facilities at the Avon Ri, Burgage Cemetery to improve access.

Upgrade walking and cycling infrastructure, including the introduction of dedicated cycle lanes around the town.

9. Environmental and Public Safety

Proposal:

Develop allotments by zoning land for community gardens.

Repurpose the old HSE building as a Scout Den to serve the growing youth community.

Install more traffic controls, particularly on the N81 at Texaco, to ensure pedestrian safety.

10. Road and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Proposal:

Wicklow County Council 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 road

11. Miscellaneous Proposals

Main Street:

Change to parallel parking bays and reroute transient traffic via the inner relief road.

Improve footpath quality, add seating, and place all cabling underground.

Introduce a shopfront strategy to improve the aesthetics of businesses.

Skate Park and Playground:

Develop a larger skate park and upgrade playground facilities to accommodate the growing population.

Dog Litter Bins:

Introduce dog litter bins in strategic locations around the town, particularly on the ring road where there are currently no bins.

Conclusion

This submission provides a comprehensive list of proposals aimed at enhancing the liveability, infrastructure, and community services in Blessington. The proposed developments will support the town's growth while preserving its unique character, improving accessibility, and fostering economic, social, and environmental sustainability.