

Blessington eGreenway

Planning Statement

Wicklow County Council

Quality information

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1 Introduction

This supporting planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Wicklow County Council (hereafter referred to as “the Applicant”). To support an application to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) seeking approval for a greenway consisting of approximately 33km of walking and cycling paths that travels around Poulaphouca Reservoir / Blessington Lake through forest and woodlands (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development).

The document makes the case for the proposed development by setting out the site description and location, the full extent of the works, the planning history on the site together with an assessment of the proposed development’s compliance with policy at national, regional and local levels. This document should be read in conjunction with the plans and particulars submitted with this application.

2 Proposed Development

2.1 Context

The principle of the Proposed Development emerged over 10 years ago in a 2010 Recreation Opportunities Feasibility Study undertaken as part of the County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy. This Feasibility Study commissioned by Blessington & District Forum identified the development of a Greenway around the Blessington Lake as a flagship project for outdoor recreation. Subsequently, an initial 6km trail along the shores of Blessington Lake linking the town to Russborough House via The Avon was developed. The Proposed Development represents the second phase of this trail development by expanding the first trail into a Greenway loop around Blessington Lake.

In 2017 a Part XI of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, as amended / Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (“Part 8 approval”) (see Table 3-1) was approved by Wicklow County Council for an earlier version of the Proposed Development. However, subsequently design changes occurred, rerouting the Greenway in certain locations. Having reviewed these changes and the update of associated environmental reports, the AA screening identified the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment to be carried out. A Natura Impact Statement accompanies this application and consequently, the application is being made to An Bord Pleanála for determination under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

The Proposed Development is to significantly enhance the existing amenities of the area and advance a culture of cycling and walking as an alternative transport mode. The enhancement and development of cycling and walking routes will provide the space to boost recreational activity contributing to enhanced health, social / community interaction and mental wellbeing. The Proposed Development would be a signature Ireland’s Ancient East visitor experience, providing an integrated tourism venue and services with links to outdoor activities, dining and accommodation providers as well as epicurean and other events to animate the Greenway use. Consequently, local economic benefits are predicted through growth in sustainable tourism and overnight stays in the area.

2.2 Overview

The Proposed Development will be a 3m to 4m wide shared use path (width varies along the path) which will be used by both pedestrians and cyclists. The path will be largely segregated from traffic where the greenway is adjacent to the public road. The Proposed Development will have a total length of c.33km.

The greenway route will follow the predominantly planted conifer plantation around the lakeshore and for some sections there is an existing trail. The greenway surface construction is proposed to consist of a machine laid, bound pavement. A 20mm surface course is proposed to be laid on a 40 mm to 55 mm base course on 150mm Clause 804 subbase on a geotextile layer as required. Construction works will require shallow excavation (maximum depth of 200 mm - 300 mm), tree removal and replacement, placement of culverts, single span bridges over larger streams, fencing and minor landscaping.

The Proposed Development includes works to existing public car parks to provide bicycle parking, information boards, bins, seating areas, drinking water stations, electric vehicle charging points and CCTV. In addition, the car parks at Knockieran and Russellstown will be extended with provision for 50 additional car parking spaces at each location.

The Proposed Development is designed in accordance with current best practice; it follows the TII Publication 'DN-GEO-03047-02 – Rural Cycleway Design' design standard. A full list of design standards and guidance are referenced in the Design Report that accompanies this application.

2.2.1 Proposed Development Details

The scheme is proposed to provide a predominately off-road shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme will cover approximately 33km and involve the provision and upgrading of a greenway mostly through forest and woodlands adjacent to the shoreline of the Blessington Lake/Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA.

Traffic lights are proposed at three existing bridge crossings (Knockiernan Bridge, Baltyboys Bridge and Valleymount Bridge) to manage a new shuttle system for vehicular traffic. This will create space within the existing bridge cross section for the provision of a shared use path to accommodate users of the eGreenway. The Proposed Development as highlighted in Figure 2-1, comprises the following;

1. Blessington – The Blessington section of the Proposed Development extends from the Wicklow County Council boundary at Russellstown to Blessington. The section comprises 9.2km in length. This section is proposed to consist of new greenway and the upgrade of existing sections along the route with a connection to Russborough House via an existing underpass of the N81. It is proposed to extend the capacity of the Russellstown car park with an additional 50 car spaces. Works to both the Russellstown Car Park and the Blessington eGreenway Hub and Car Park will provide electric vehicle charging points, bicycle parking, bins, seating areas, drinking water stations and CCTV. There is 1 no. new watercourse crossing included in this section while several existing crossings are to be retained.
2. Baltyboys – The Baltyboys section of the Proposed Development extends from the Blessington section to the Valleymount section. This section comprises 5.3km in length. Works to the Valleymount West Car Park and Baltyboys car park will provide electric vehicle charging points, bike parking, bins, seating, drinking water stations and CCTV. Precast box culverts and gabion retaining walls will be required within this section to construct the Proposed Development. There are approximately 5 no. small watercourses/ditches crossings along this section.
3. Tulfarris – The Tulfarris section of the Proposed Development connects the Baltyboys section to Tulfarris via the R758. This section comprises 3.7km in length. This section is proposed to consist of new greenway and share the existing road to connect with the Tulfarris Hotel & Golf Resort. There are approximately 2 no. new small watercourse/ditch crossings along its length.
4. Valleymount – The Valleymount section of the Proposed Development extends from Baltyboys to Ballyknockan. This section comprises 5.2km in length commencing at the Valleymount carpark, which is located adjacent to Valleymount GAA club. Works to the two carparks in Valleymount East and West will provide electric vehicle charging points, bicycle parking, bins, seating areas, drinking water stations, and CCTV. Precast box culverts and gabion retaining walls will be required within this section. There are approximately 3 no. small watercourses/ditches crossed by the Proposed Development in this section as well as crossing of the Annacarney Stream.
5. Ballyknockan – The Ballyknockan section of the Proposed Development extends from Ballyknockan to Lacken. This section comprises 4.3km in length. Gabion retaining walls will be required within this section. Due to the high ground to the east there are a few small tributaries on this section with approximately 13 no. small watercourses/ditches requiring to be accommodated by the Proposed Development.
6. Lacken – The Lacken section of the Proposed Development extends from Lacken to Knockiernan Bridge. This section comprises 5.6km in length. The section involves new greenway construction. Precast box culverts, concrete underpasses, and gabion retaining walls will be required within this section. It is proposed to extend the capacity of the Knockiernan car park with an additional 50 car spaces. Works to both Knockiernan and Lacken car park will provide electric vehicle charging points, bicycle parking, bins, seating areas, drinking water stations, and CCTV. The eastern side of the lakes has many small tributaries resulting in the Proposed Development having to accommodate approximately 7 no. small watercourses/ditches.

Signage will be provided to include visitor information, way-finding information, heritage information and advisory/regulatory information in proximity to road crossings. All signage will be subject to full specification at detailed design stage of the project in accordance with national technical standards and guidance.

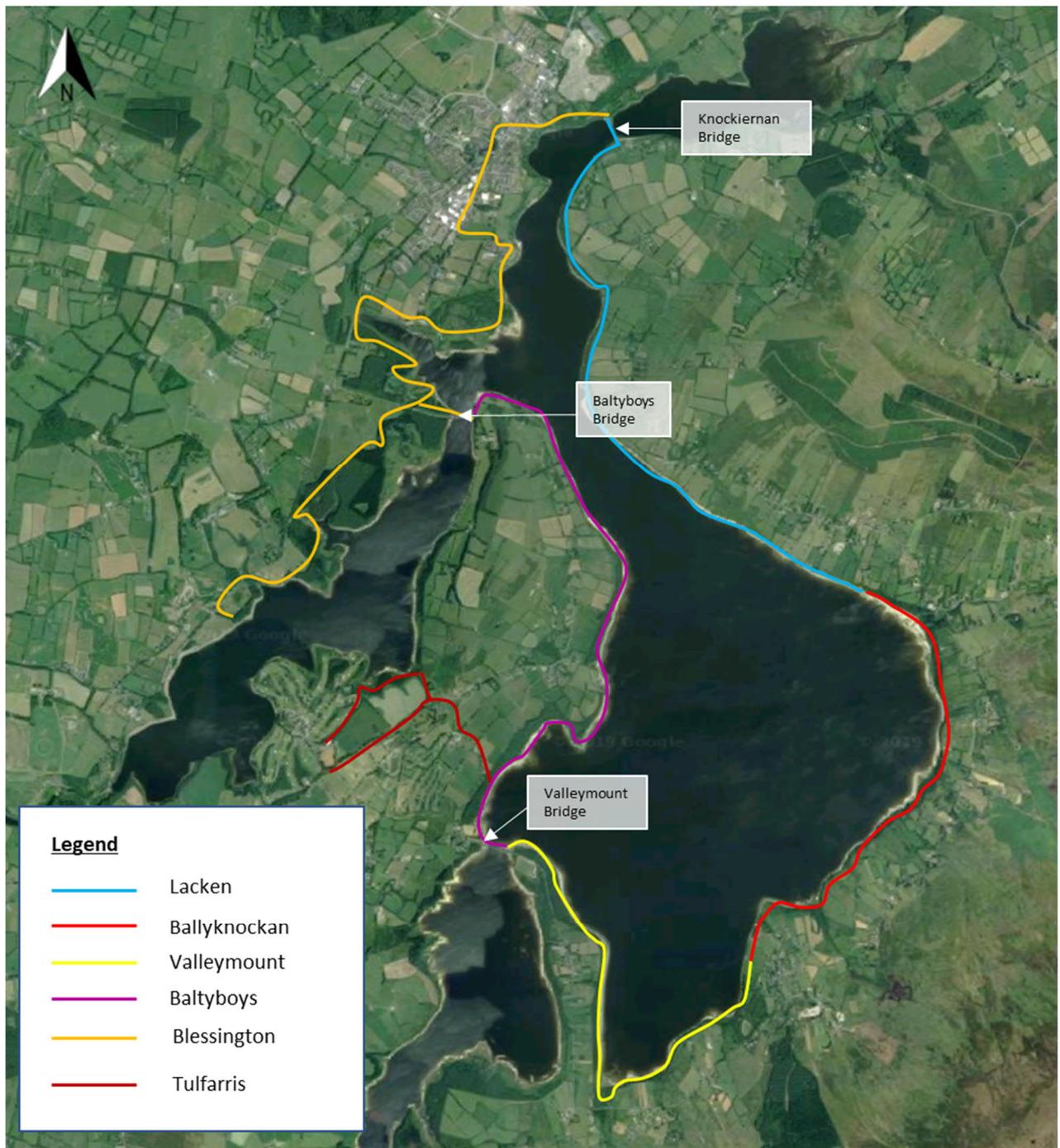


Figure 2-1 Routing of the Proposed Development

3 Site Context & Appraisal

3.1 Site Location

The site (hereafter referred to as the Subject site) for the Proposed Development is located approximately 30km southwest of Dublin city centre, and 36km northwest of Wicklow town. The regional location of the Subject site is highlighted in Figure 3-1. The Subject site is primarily accessible from the N81 national secondary road that connects to the M50 motorway and links up to the R758 regional road and L4365 local road. The Subject site predominantly comprises greenfields and areas of established conifer plantations, with minor sections of agricultural lands and townscape. The Subject site is adjacent to Mullaghcleevaun mountain peak which forms part of the Wicklow Mountains National Park.

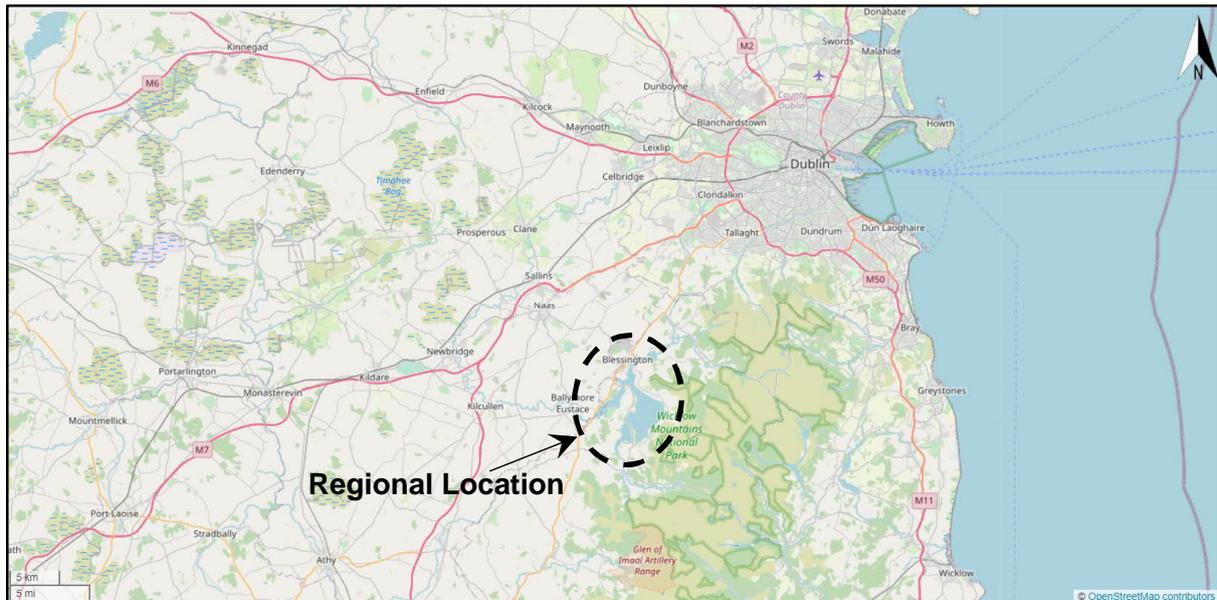


Figure 3-1 Regional Location Map, Source: OpenStreetMap

3.2 Site Description

The Subject site encompasses the Blessington Lake/Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA, in Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The overall size of the Proposed Development will span over c.33km predominantly through existing walking and cycling trails through the forest and woodlands adjacent to the shoreline of Poulaphouca Reservoir – more commonly referred to as the Blessington Lakes.

The Subject site spans along the lakeshore edge of the Blessington lakes predominantly in commercial planted conifer plantation around the lakeshore and for parts there is an existing trail where walkers have worn a path through the lands adjacent to the lakeshore, which will be resurfaced and widened as part of the Proposed Development works.

3.2.1 Existing Land Use and Land Zonings

The Proposed Development follows the lakeshore edge of the Blessington lakes predominantly in commercial planted conifer plantation around the lakeshore and for parts there is an existing trail where walkers have worn a path through the lands adjacent to the lakeshore, which will be resurfaced and widened as part of the Proposed Development works.

According to the relevant local level policies Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2016-2022 and the Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019, most of the land associated with the Proposed Development is not explicitly been zoned.

The CDP does reference the “*rural area*”, that forms the “*open countryside*”, which includes all lands outside of the designated settlement boundaries of the county. The CDP also recognises that these lands can host a range of activities, of relevance; rural recreational activities and rural tourism, this is further referred to in Table 4-4.

A section of the Proposed Development does however run through Blessington town, which has adopted a Local Area Plan for the period 2013-2019. The predominant zoning that the Proposed Development passes through within Blessington is highlighted in Figure 4-2 of this document. The LAP has also designated Action Areas and Specific Local Objectives of relevance to the Proposed Development that is detailed in section 4.3.4 of this planning statement.

3.2.2 Planning History Context

A desktop search of proposed and existing planning applications was undertaken on the 8th February 2021. The search used publicly available data from MyPlan.ie ‘National Planning Application’ database, Wicklow County Council (WCC), Kildare County Council (KCC) planning application portal and An Bord Pleanála’s (ABP) online database. A detailed planning search is included in Appendix A of this document, applications of specific importance to the Proposed Development are noted in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Relevant Part 8 application Search

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status
17307	Blessington, Co. Wicklow	Greenway. Construct a new crushed stone track in order to create a walking & cycling greenway which will follow the edge of the Blessington Lakes together with the upgrading of the existing tracks commencing in the town of Blessington and following a route close to the shoreline through the townlands of Baltyboys Lower, Tulfarris, Rathballylong, Baltyboys Upper, Monamuck, Vallemount, Annacarney, Carrigacurra, Ballyknockan, Ballynastockan, Lacken, Sroughan, Carrig, Knockieran Upper, Knockieran Lower, Blessington and Burgage More and the villages of Vallemount, Ballyknockan and Lacken before returning to Blessington at Knockieran Bridge. Upgrading works will include widening of existing track and laying of geotextile with a surface layer of crushed stone surface. Construction works will involve shallow excavation, laying of geotextile with a surface layer of crushed stone surface, placement of approx. 100 culverts, 18 light bridges over larger streams, fencing and minor landscaping.	Granted 03/07/2017

The planning history contained in Appendix A of this document highlights applications within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development, these predominantly consist of residential, agricultural, and recreational nature.

Of direct relevance to the Proposed Development, Table 3-1 identifies the Part 8 application Ref No. 17307 from Wicklow County Council (WCC) for a development of similar size, location and description, that was passed by members of WCC at a meeting on the 03/07/2017. The principle of development of a Greenway around Blessington Lake has been established. As noted in section 2.1 above this approval was for an earlier version of the Proposed Development, however at detailed design stage a number of design changes have occurred rerouting the Greenway in certain locations. In review of these changes and updating of environmental reports the AA screening required the completion of a Natura Impact Statement. It should also be reminded, that the approval of this application was positively referred to within the Eastern and Midlands RSES as a flagship greenway for the region.

In consideration to the precedent nature in regard to the approval of the previous Part 8 application Ref No. 17307, listed in Table 3-1, it is considered that this would support the Proposed Development and confirm the propriety of the overall land zoning that it pertains to. Approximately 600m of the Proposed Development is in Co. Kildare for which a Section 85 agreement is in place.

For further details on the planning history refer to Appendix A of this document.

3.2.3 Surrounding Environment

3.2.3.1 Natural Heritage

The Proposed Development is located adjacent to Poulaphouca Reservoir, Special Protection Area (SPA) (site code: 004063). Blessington Lake or Poulaphouca Reservoir is also designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (site code: 000731).

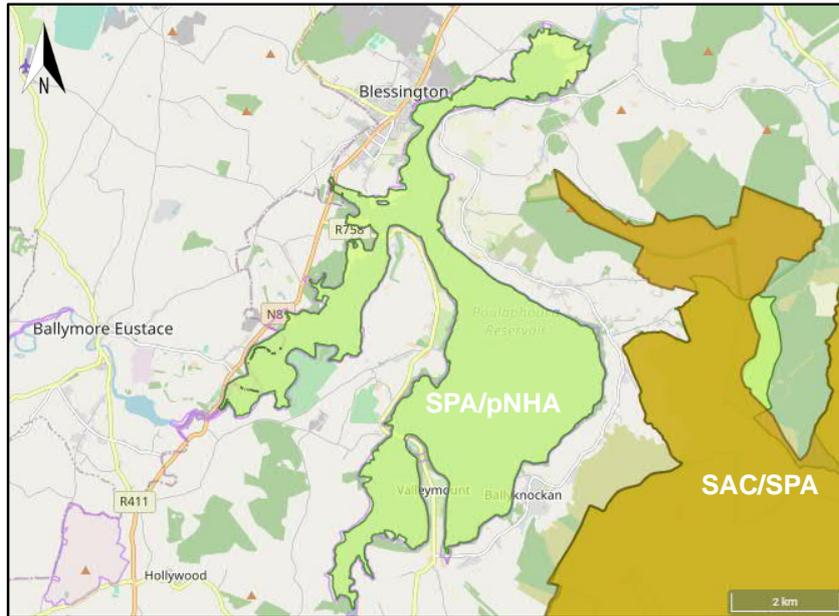


Figure 3-2 Protected Designations, Source EPAmaps.ie [annotations added]

A total of 6 sites designated as SAC or SPA and a total of 13 NHAs were recorded within 15km of the Proposed Development. Further information on this is discussed in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) carried out for the Proposed Development by Flynn Furney, Built Heritage

3.2.3.2 Record Monuments and Protected Structures

There is a number of Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures within proximity of the Proposed Development (highlighted in green), these structures are highlighted in red and blue in Figure 3-.

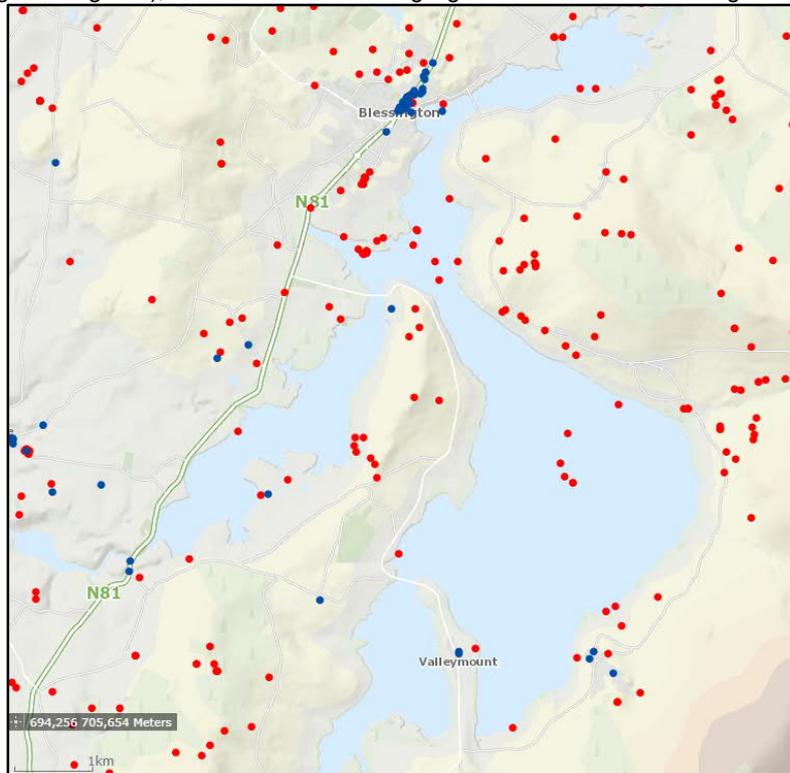


Figure 3-3 Locations of Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures, (indicative location of greenway identified in green) Source: MyPlan.ie

An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by AECOM in March 2021, on behalf of the Applicant. The AIA provides a detailed assessment of the Proposed Development, potential impacts and mitigation.

4 Planning Policy Context & Appraisal

The receiving planning policy environment for the Proposed Development is largely outlined in the following pertinent documents. A general overview of relevant policy and guidance on a national, regional and local levels that are assessed in this planning statement are as follows;

National Policy

- National Planning Framework 2018 - 2040
- National Development Plan 2018 - 2027
- National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027
- Smarter Travel: A New Transport policy for Ireland 2009 - 2020
- Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 - 2025
- National Physical Activity Plan 2016
- The National Cycle Policy Framework, 2009 – 2020
- Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
- Climate Action Plan 2019
- Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020

Regional Policy

- Eastern and Midlands Region - Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2019 - 2031

Local Policy

- Wicklow County Development Plan 2015-2021
- County Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022
- County Wicklow Tourism Strategy 2018 - 2023
- Blessington Local Area Plan 2013 - 2019

4.1 National Policy

4.1.1 National Planning Framework 2018 - 2027

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040, this was released in tandem with the National Development Plan (NDP), which sets out the budget for national infrastructure investment for the next 10 years.

The NPF is considered a new approach, that aims to improve the different areas of our lives, while bringing the various government departments, agencies, State owned enterprises and local authorities together behind a shared set of strategic objectives for rural, regional and urban development.

Of relevance to the Proposed Development, the NPF states;

“The development of greenways, blueways and peatways offer a unique alternative means for tourists and visitors to access and enjoy rural Ireland. The development of a strategic national network of these trails is a priority and will support the development of rural communities and job creation in the rural economy, as well as the protection and promotion of natural assets and biodiversity.”

Furthermore, the NPF refers to key planning and development and place-making policy priorities for the Eastern and Midland Region, specifically;

“Building on the progress made in developing an integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways, that will support the diversification of rural and regional economies and promote more sustainable forms of travel and activity based recreation utilising canal and former rail and other routes.”

The NPF is supported by 10 shared goals or National Strategic Outcomes (NSO). The most applicable of these NSOs, within the context of the Proposed Development, are;

National Strategic Outcome 3: Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

“A strong start has also been made in the development of a national long-distance Greenway/ Blueway Network. Such a network, including rural walking, cycling and water-based recreation routes, as well as ‘peatways’, has demonstrated major potential to bring new life to regional and rural locations through the “win-win” scenario of increased tourism activity and healthier travel. Developing this network further will diversify our rural economy by embracing the potential for a major expansion in the demand for activity based tourism.”

National Strategic Outcome 7: Enhanced Amenities and Heritage

“Attractive places include a combination of factors, including vitality and diversity of uses, ease of access to amenities and services supported by integrated transport systems and green modes of movement such as pedestrian and cycling facilities. Appealing places are also defined by their character, heritage and sense of community. This includes attractive buildings and street layouts, civic spaces and parks and regeneration of older areas and making places feel safe through active use and design.”

The NPF delivered a series of National Policy Objectives (NPO) to set the context for regional and local planning policy in Ireland, Table 4-1 lists the NPOs that are considered to be supportive of the Proposed Development.

Table 4-1 National Planning Framework - National Policy Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
NPO 18a	Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.	In the interest of maintaining the vibrancy of Blessington town’s Main Street, the Proposed Development aims to enhance the existing infrastructure with a combination of footpath widening, traffic calming, on road cycling, shared use paths and a segregated two-way cycle path will be implemented to enhance the safety and movement for all users. In addition, the Greenway is predicted to increase sustainable tourism in the area to the benefit of the local economy.
NPO 22	Facilitate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.	The Proposed Development will have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to the area, contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity. The Proposed Development is proposed to be a signature project in Ireland Ancient East network. The majority of the Proposed Development will provide a substantially segregated off-road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery. The Proposed Development will provide further opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies,
NPO 26	Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.	The Proposed Development will significantly enhance the existing amenities of the area and provide high quality designed facilities to boost physical activity as well as social interaction and associated wellbeing benefits for all users.
NPO 27	Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.	The Proposed Development will ensure that alternatives are more widely available, through new and improved cycling and walking routes. The majority of the Proposed Development will provide a substantially segregated off-road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery. These are the building blocks required to boost a culture of cycling and walking as an alternative transport mode to achieve the target of Ireland becoming less car dependent.
NPO 54	Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.	The operational phase of the Proposed Development will have no increase to emissions as it is non-vehicular, and will provide alternative routes for walking and cycling while improving accessibility within the area.

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
NPO 62	Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.	At a local level, the Proposed Development will offer an opportunity to enhance the existing accessibility and connectivity of the surrounding settlements Baltyboys Lower, Tulfarris, Rathballylong, Baltyboys Upper, Monamuck, Valleymount, Annacarney, Carrigacurra, Ballyknockan, Ballynastockan, Lacken, Sroughan, Carrig, Knockieran Upper, Knockieran Lower, Blessington and Burgage More and the villages of Valleymount, Ballyknockan and Lacken through a sustainable, environmentally friendly transport option. The greenway will also become part of National Greenway network that provides the opportunity for sustainable tourism.
NPO 64	Improve air quality and help prevent people being exposed to unacceptable levels of pollution in our urban and rural areas through integrated land use and spatial planning that supports public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport to the private car, the promotion of energy efficient buildings and homes, heating systems with zero local emissions, green infrastructure planning and innovative design solutions.	The operational phase of the Proposed Development will have no increase to emissions as it is non-vehicular, and will provide alternative routes for walking and cycling while improving accessibility within the area.

Consequently, the principle of the Proposed Development is encouraged by the overarching planning framework in the Country, outlining the multiple benefits of a development of this nature.

4.1.2 National Development Plan 2018 - 2040

The National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP) came into effect in February 2018, in tandem with the National Planning Framework (NPF). The purpose of the NDP aims to drive Ireland's economic, environmental and social progress over the next decade. The key role of the NDP is to set out the updated configuration for public capital investment over the next 10 years in order to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes as set out within the NPF.

The NDP outlines initiatives that aim to enhance the economic growth for rural areas, of specific relevance;

“The Rural Recreation Infrastructure Scheme supports the development and necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of recreational infrastructure throughout Ireland in light of the huge potential to develop the economic value of Activity and Recreational Tourism by Local Authorities, State Agencies and communities. Initiatives funded covered a broad spectrum and range from walking trails to greenways and blueways.”

In the context of the above definition, this supports a strong confluence between cycling and walking as a tourism asset and the recreational activity for local residents. In return, complementing a culture of cycling and walking as a transport mode for everyday life. Furthermore, the Proposed Development satisfies the policies that seek future investment in activity based tourism.

4.1.3 National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027

The National Sports Policy (NSP) sets out the vision for Irish sport to 2027, while defining the 57 actions required to achieve the set goals. The policy has highlighted the need to adopt and adapt the Council of Europe's definition where *“sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aims at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”*

The NSP overarching vision, sets out to;

“...capture the importance of sport to life in Ireland and to counteract a commonly-held view that it is nothing more than a game or merely a distraction from the important events in life. We believe that getting more people involved in sport as active and social participants, enabling them to have quality experiences, and securing international success from our top sports people will enrich our country in a variety of ways...”

A main aspect of the Proposed Development aims to provide infrastructure that will improve fitness, mental health and wellbeing and increase social relationships. In addition, providing access to a wide range of activities such as recreational walking, cycling, canoeing or kayaking, whilst enjoying the natural and built surrounding environment.

The definition of recreational sport is defined within the Sport Ireland Act, 2015, as;

“all forms of physical activity which, through casual or regular participation, aim at — (a) expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, and (b) forming social relationships;”

The NSP has also identified the need to expand the national register to include other outdoor activity amenities. While stating, collaboration from Government Departments that fund the development of trails and outdoor recreation infrastructure will be required. The NSP also recognises the positive effects completed Greenways are having with attracting growing numbers of cyclists and walkers.

The NSP lists and defines the 57 actions required to achieve its targets. Of specific relevance to the Proposed development, are the following;

Action 13

“Apart from investment in traditional sports infrastructure we will examine how the wider natural and built environment can facilitate participation in sport and physical activity. This consideration will also take account of the type of activities towards which adults are increasingly gravitating such as running, cycling, outdoor adventure pursuits, recreational walking, etc.”

Action 37

“Fáilte Ireland will continue to support NGBs in attracting those sports events which meet its events criteria and deliver a significant economic return.”

The Proposed Development offers a unique opportunity that will provide infrastructure for recreational use in an area of sublime scenery. The surrounding environment offers exquisite natural and built heritage that will further promote and encourage physical activity in multiple forms of recreational sport, such as, but not limited to, walking and cycling via the proposed new routes.

4.1.4 Smarter Travel: A New Transport policy for Ireland 2009-2020

This Policy sets out a vision of sustainable travel and transport in Ireland by 2020. It recognises cycling and walking as the transport modes with the least environmental impacts and a realistic alternative to the private car. The policy envisages cycling and walking facilities that form a coherent network. In addition, the policy considers cycling and walking as pivotal to achieving the goals in national health policies that seek to promote physical activity.

The Policy states that *“actions aimed at ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking”*.

Furthermore, under Action 17, it specifically refers to;

“Many State properties are used for recreation and leisure. We will ensure that, where feasible, areas of State-owned lands such as canal towpaths, former rail lines, Coillte estates, etc. are made available for the development of walking and cycling trails.”

The *Smarter Travel: A New Transport policy for Ireland 2009-2020* represents a commitment to promote cycling and walking in Ireland and strengthen its culture. The Proposed Development has the potential to directly assist in achieving these targets supporting the overall vision of the Policy.

4.1.5 Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 - 2025

The Healthy Ireland Framework is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland. The Framework is designed to bring measurable change and is based on an understanding of the determinants of health. Health and wellbeing are affected through many aspects of life; economic status, education, housing, the physical environment in which people live and work. The Framework’s overall vision aims to achieve a healthy Ireland, where;

“...everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility.”

The Framework describes four high-level goals based around;

- *to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life*
- *to reduce health inequalities*

- *to protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing*
- *to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland*

The Framework also highlights the prevalence of many conditions increasing at a fast rate amongst Irish people at all ages. In particular, some concerning Irish health trends are referred to below;

- In Ireland, 61% of all adults and 25% of 3-year-olds are overweight or obese; 26% of 9-year-olds have a body mass index outside the healthy range.
- *Three in four people over fifty in Ireland are either overweight or obese.*
- *The incidence of heart disease, cancers, type-2 diabetes, (including type-2 diabetes in children and adolescents) is set to increase. Obesity is the leading cause of cancer in non-smokers.*
- *Mental health is a growing health, social and economic issue and it is expected that depressive mental illnesses will be the leading cause of chronic disease in high-income countries by 2030. One in every four people will experience mental health problems during his/her lifetime.*

These trends place an excessive demand on Irelands currently strained health services. The Framework has also connected the importance of physical activity in tackling these concerning trends.

The Framework's four high-level goals listed above, are accompanied with 64 detailed actions to achieve these goals. These actions are grouped under six themes, of specific relevance to the Proposed Development, are the following;

Action reference 2.11;

“Develop a plan to promote increased physical activity levels across the population, as an exemplar of how Healthy Ireland will work. The Healthy Ireland Council will be key in developing linkages with and between partners and advising on priorities.”

The Healthy Ireland Framework is the national policy attempt to improve the health and wellbeing of all people in Ireland. The commitment given in this Framework has led to the development of the National Physical Activity Plan to further promote increased physical activity levels across the whole of Ireland, with a strong focus on modifying unhealthy lifestyle habits and promoting awareness of the benefits of physical activity.

Action reference 3.10;

“In creating ‘activity friendly’ environments: cycle lanes, playgrounds, well-lit paths, etc, local authorities will engage with local communities, schools and other stakeholders to plan facilities that are appropriate to the needs of the community.”

The current health trends of Ireland demonstrate a clear concern, however there is significant evidence that connects increased physical activity with improved health and wellbeing. The Proposed Development aims to enhance the existing amenities of the surrounding areas, that will provide high quality designed facilities for all users. This will result in, the promotion and attraction for all ages of the community and wider regions, that will assist them in increasing their physical activity levels on a daily basis.

4.1.1 National Physical Activity Plan 2016

The National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) for Ireland was launched on the 14th January 2016. The NPAP is a direct response of Healthy Ireland Framework, namely Action 2.11;

“Develop a plan to promote increased physical activity levels across the population, as an exemplar of how Healthy Ireland will work. The Healthy Ireland Council will be key in developing linkages with and between partners and advising on priorities.”

The NPAP set out eight action areas ranging from; Public Awareness, Education and Communication, Children and Young People, Health, Environment, Workplaces, Sport and Physical Activity in the Community, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Implementation through Partnership.

The NPAP implementation summary was published in 2019. This report provided an updated overview and highlighted some of the positive developments which took place in 2019 to promote physical activity in Ireland.

Of specific relevance to the Proposed Development, is Action area 4; Environment, that recognises Ireland's natural and built environments to promote physical activity.

“Promoting the recreational use of the natural and built environment and active transport are practical and sustainable ways to increase physical activity as part of everyday routine. Amenities such as greenways, blueways, cycle paths and parks can provide opportunities, choices and support for being more physically active.”

A key achievement of Action area 4, has highlighted that the Department of Rural and Community Development approved funding of €10.2 million for 153 projects under the 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme towards the development of trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways, blueways and mountain access routes.

In addition, Action area 6 – Sport and Physical Activity in the Community;

“Local stakeholders work together to promote active communities and increase physical activity levels among all members of the community with a particular focus on disadvantaged areas, people with disabilities, older people, women and those who are otherwise socially excluded.”

Action area 6 has included many key achievements, of specific relevance to the Proposed Development, is the 2017 strategy; Get Ireland Walking (GIW), this is a cross-collaboration between national and local organisations and stakeholders with the aim to get more people walking for recreation, transport and health. Furthermore, the Proposed Development will greatly assist the implementation of both Action 4 and 6 with this proposed new infrastructure which aims to further increase physical activity for all ages and providing alternative practical and sustainable ways, such as walking and cycling.

4.1.2 The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009 – 2020

The National Cycling Policy Framework (NCPF) is Ireland’s first cycling framework. With influence taking from international experiences, the NCPF sets out an integrated basis for the long term development and implementation of cycling policies among various sectors and levels of government. The NCPF is a direct contribution to a sustainable travel vision for Ireland.

“The mission is to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland. The vision is that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. Cycling will be a normal way to get about, especially for short trips. Cycling contributes to improved quality of life and quality of the public realm, a stronger economy and business environment, and an enhanced environment. A culture of cycling will have developed in Ireland to the extent that 10% of all trips will be by bike by 2020.”

The NCPF sets out 19 objectives developed to enhance a cycling culture, these are listed in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 National Cycle Policy Framework Objectives

Ref.	Objective
Objective 1	Support the planning, development and design of towns and cities in a cycling and pedestrian friendly way.
Objective 2	Ensure that the urban road infrastructure (with the exception of motorways) is designed / retrofitted so as to be cyclist-friendly and that traffic management measures are also cyclist friendly.
Objective 3	Provide designated rural cycle networks especially for visitors and recreational cycling.
Objective 4	Provide cycling-friendly routes to all schools, adequate cycling parking facilities within schools, and cycling training to all school pupils.
Objective 5	Ensure that all of the surfaces used by cyclists are maintained to a high standard and are well lit.
Objective 6	Ensure that all cycling networks - both urban and rural - are signposted to an agreed standard.
Objective 7	Provide secure parking for bikes.
Objective 8	Ensure proper integration between cycling and public transport.
Objective 9	Provide public bikes in cities.
Objective 10	Improve the image of cycling and promote cycling using “soft interventions” such as promotional campaigns, events etc.
Objective 11	Improve cyclists’ cycling standards and behaviour on the roads.
Objective 12	Improve driver education and driving standards so that there is a greater appreciation for the safety needs of cyclists.
Objective 13	Support the provision of fiscal incentives to cycle.
Objective 14	Provide appropriate levels of, and timely, financial resources towards implementing the NCPF.

Ref.	Objective
Objective 15	Introduce changes to legislation to improve cyclist safety.
Objective 16	Improve enforcement of traffic laws to enhance cyclist safety and respect for cyclists.
Objective 17	Develop a structure that can coordinate the implementation of activities across the many Government Departments, Agencies and NGO's.
Objective 18	Provide design professionals with suitable training / guidance to develop and implement the policies of the NCPF. Support the deepening of knowledge of the subject of planning for cyclists in Ireland.
Objective 19	Evaluate the cycling policy and monitor the success as the measures are implemented.

The key targets the NCPF aims to achieve, are listed below;

- *Reach 160,000 people commuting to work by bike daily (an increase of 125,000 people);*
- *Invest in better, safer cycle routes around the country for commuters, leisure cyclists and visitors;*
- *Increase cycling's share of journeys from 2% to 10% by 2020;*
- *Introduce a new approach to the design of urban roads to better recognise the needs of cyclists and pedestrians; and*
- *Retrofit major road junctions and roadways in key cities and towns to make them cycle friendly.*

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the most notable changes in commuting patterns between the 2011 and 2016 census, was the sharp rise in people cycling to work, these numbers rose by approximately 43% from 39,803 to 56,837. The number of cyclists peaked in 1986 at 60,750, 6.8% making up the commuting population. However the 2016 census indicated that cyclists still only accounted for 3% of the commuting population.

The NCPF aim to create a culture of cycling in Ireland, so it is viewed as an attractive mode of transport, particularly for short trips in urban areas. The implementation of high quality cycling infrastructure such as the Proposed Development, will play an important role in promoting this new culture.

4.1.3 Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018

The objective of the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant Greenways in appropriate locations, constructed to an appropriate standard, in order to deliver a quality experience for all Greenway users.

With the support of the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport, Local Communities, Local Landowners Local Authorities and other state bodies, the Strategy seeks to deliver;

- *A Strategic Greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure;*
- *Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity;*
- *Greenways that provide a substantially segregated off-road experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do;*
- *Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies, and*
- *Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice.*

With respect to the objectives listed above, the Proposed Development would be considered compliant with this Strategy. Of specific importance, the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands, has referenced the previously approved Blessington Greenway as a flagship greenway for the region, and fully supports its potential.

4.1.4 Climate Action Plan 2019

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2019 sets out proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over all sectors in Ireland. The aim of this plan is to set Ireland on a path to become one of the leading countries tackling climate change. The CAP outlines the importance of sustainable development and planning when tackling climate breakdown.

The CAP specifically highlights the need to provide good public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, and to become less reliant on their cars, as one approach to tackle congested area. The CAP also addresses that policies need to be aligned better to achieve the ambitious targets for a modal shift.

“Expand sustainable-travel measures, including a comprehensive cycling and walking network for metropolitan areas of Ireland’s cities, with a particular emphasis on safety of cyclists. We shall also expand greenways, and develop over 200km of new cycling network under BusConnects”

While Project Ireland 2040 promotes a compact and connected developments, with new public transport networks, this alone will not reverse the growth of emissions, projected to increase by 25%. The NPF population projections, estimate Ireland will increase by approximately 1 million people over the next two decades. This will put further demand on transport across all modes, with the increased movement of people and goods.

While this increase may intensify the decarbonisation target, the CAP refers to making growth less transport intensive through policies that aim to promote the expansion of walking, cycling.

Furthermore, it should be recognised that the Proposed Development is an essential segment of public infrastructure that will support these key policies and assist in reaching the targets set out within the CAP.

In addition, the CAP has highlighted that the Government supports the adoption of a net zero target by 2050 at EU level. The CAP aims to implement a decarbonisation pathway to 2030, which would be consistent with the adoption of a net zero target in Ireland by 2050.

This is further referenced in Action 1 of the CAP;

“Evaluate in detail the changes required to adopt a more ambitious commitment of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as part of finalising Ireland’s long-term climate strategy by the end of 2019 as per the advice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the recommendation of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action”

4.1.5 Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020

The Programme for Government was published in October 2020. It proposed an ambitious vision to create reform and renewal that will help Ireland recover and thrive.

“This is a vision for Ireland that seeks to move beyond division and discord and find shared solutions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of Climate Action, where we show that it is possible to move beyond politics and deliver transformative change that benefits our agriculture and fisheries, our society, our economy and our planet.”

The Programme recognises the enormous potential cycling and walking and electric cycling have to facilitate a high proportion of daily trips. The Programme states the government will commit to an allocation of 10% of the total transport capital budget for cycling projects and an allocation of 10% of the total capital budget for pedestrian infrastructure. The Government’s commitment to cycling and pedestrian projects will be set at 20% of the 2020 capital budget per year for the lifetime of the Government. This will deliver a five-year, multi-annual funding programme linked with a specific target of new separated cycling and walking infrastructure, which will be delivered or under construction by the end of 2024.

The Programme supports;

“.....the development of an integrated national greenways strategy. This has the potential to transform modal shift and improve air quality and public health. This commitment to cycling will enable us to achieve the huge ambition of developing an integrated national network of greenways to be used by commuters, leisure cyclists and tourists. We will continue the coordinated approach between central government, local authorities, and agencies to deliver on this ambition.”

The Programme highlights the necessity for policy changes across all sectors, specifically;

“Ensuring an unprecedented modal shift in all areas by a reorientation of investment to walking, cycling and public transport.”

The Programme has also envisaged the requirement for the government to be pro-active in raising awareness for personal health, wellbeing, and physical activity. It recognises that physical activity is central to enhancing health and wellbeing. In addition, the COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of activities such as; running, cycling, and walking. The Proposed Development aligns with the Programmes vision and directly supports the policies that it outlines.

4.2 Regional Policy

4.2.1 Eastern and Midlands Region – Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2019 - 2031

There are three regional assemblies in Ireland, with a main function to identify regional policies and coordinate initiatives that support the delivery of national planning policy. The primary driver for this is the implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES). The RSES provides regional level strategic planning and economic policy in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework and provides a greater level of focus around the National Policy Objectives (NPO) and National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) of the NPF.

While the three regions may differ in some ways, they do not operate in total isolation and there are many complementing and connecting assets shared between the regions. Due to the strategic national and regional nature of some development proposals, a consistent policy approach to regional and economic planning is an essential tool when assessing future development for Ireland.

The overall vision of the RSES, sets out to;

“...create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all”

The RSES, has referred to significant opportunities to develop a number of flagship greenways in the region, and has specifically referenced the previously approved Blessington Greenway;

“.....approved extension around Blessington Lake, taking in the surrounding villages of Lacken and Ballyknockan and offers the potential to attract people to work and visit the area and surrounding villages.”

In addition, the RSES has provided a range of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) that set the context for planning policy in Ireland. Table 4-3 lists the RPOs that are considered relevant to the Proposed Development.

Table 4-3 Eastern and Midland RSES Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
RPO 6.15	Support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans within the Region to underpin the overarching regional tourism brands and to deliver greater tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the Region.	The Proposed Development is proposed to become a signature project as part of Failte Irelands, Ireland Ancient East tourism brand, to deliver sustainable tourism benefits by the promoting of the natural and cultural assets the greenway would provide access too.
RPO 6.16	Support working with relevant landowners and recreational/ tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and coastal areas to ensure maintenance of the existing network.	The Proposed Development will have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism by linking places of cultural interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery, with the new greenway and upgrades to existing trails, linked to wider tourism network within Irelands Ancient East.
RPO 6.17	Support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state and semi-state lands such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways, etc., together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes. Access should be planned and managed in a sustainable manner that protects environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors, and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.	The majority of the Proposed Development will provide a substantially segregated off-road experience linking places of cultural and environmental interest, recreation and leisure in a sensitive sustainable manner respecting the protected natural environment.

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
RPO 6.21	EMRA will work with local authorities and Fáilte Ireland to identify destination towns within the Region for the prioritisation of investment and supports to drive tourism growth in the Region, to spread the benefit of tourism throughout the Region and to encourage the increase of tourism product development.	The Proposed Development has been already been identified as a potential signature Ireland Ancient East visitor experience adding value to existing tourism venues in the surrounding counties providing a West Wicklow bookend and reducing tourism pressure on the East Wicklow Glendalough experience. The Greenway development.
RPO 7.7	To reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for all urban and rural areas in the Region and to work with local authorities and the relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring and to inform a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions inventory.	The operational phase of the Proposed Development will have no increase to emissions as it is non-vehicular, and will provide alternative routes for walking and cycling while improving accessibility within the area.
RPO 7.24	Promote the development of a sustainable Strategic Greenway Network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and /or linked with local greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure, notwithstanding that capacity of a greenway is limited to what is ecologically sustainable.	The RSES, has referred to significant opportunities to develop a number of flagship greenways in the region, and has specifically referenced the previously approved Blessington Greenway; <i>".....approved extension around Blessington Lake, taking in the surrounding villages of Lacken and Ballyknockan and offers the potential to attract people to work and visit the area and surrounding villages."</i>
RPO 7.25	Support local authorities and state agencies in the delivery of sustainable strategic greenways, blueways, and peatways projects in the Region under the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.	The Proposed Development is a Wicklow County Council project for the delivery of a sustainable greenway. It has been designed in accordance with current best practice; it will follow the TII Publication 'DN-GEO-03047-02 – Rural Cycleway Design' as the design standard and full suite of relevant documentation to detail the design, construction and environmental impact of the Proposed Development has been completed to demonstrate its compliance with proper planning and sustainable development of the region.
RPO 7.31	Within 1 year of carrying out a regional emissions assessment, EMRA shall compile and publish an emissions inventory and, in collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies, agree emissions reductions targets in accordance with agreed national sectoral plans and to support an aggregate 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 in line with the EU 2030 Framework.	The operational phase of the Proposed Development will have no increase to emissions as it is non-vehicular, and will provide alternative routes for walking and cycling while improving accessibility within the area.
RPO 8.7	To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use.	The Proposed Development will provide the infrastructure to facilitate a shift in culture towards cycling and walking as an alternative transport mode.
RPO 9.10	In planning for the creation of healthy and attractive places, there is a need to provide alternatives to the car and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces.	The Proposed Development will connect areas of interest through attractive places providing the infrastructure to promote cycling and walking.
RPO 9.13	Local authorities and relevant agencies shall ensure that new social infrastructure developments are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by adopting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full, active, valued and healthy lives.	The Proposed Development will implement a universal design approach that provides for people of all ages in accordance with current best practice; it will follow the TII Publication 'DN-GEO-03047-02 – Rural Cycleway Design' as the design standard. The development will year-round accessible to all, providing doorstep activity and exercise space and a space to meet and talk, increasing social interaction.
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.	The Proposed Development will have significant potential in contributing to a healthier society for all ages through increased physical activity at all levels. The greenway infrastructure will provide a self-led facility for sport and exercise as well as a resource for group and commercial exercise activities.
RPO 9.16	Local authorities shall support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policies contained in development plans.	The Proposed Development will have significant potential in contributing to a healthier society for all ages through increased physical activity at all levels, and is compliant with public health policies; Healthy Ireland Framework and the National Physical Activity Plan.

Similar to the CAP proposed implementation of a decarbonisation pathway, the RSES climate strategy has reiterated these targets and aims to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030. The principle of the Proposed Development directly supports these key policies and will assist in the implication of the targets set out within the RSES.

In addition the RSES has referenced the significant opportunities to develop a number of flagship greenways in the region, and has specifically referenced the 2017 approved Blessington Greenway Project and the multiple benefits to society. With respect to the policies listed in Table 4-3, the Proposed Development would unreservedly satisfy these objectives of the RSES.

4.3 Local Policy

4.3.1 Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2016-2022

The national and regional objectives referred in the sections above have been developed further and translated into local objectives through the Wicklow County Development Plan (2016-2022) (CDP). The CDP sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the entire county of Wicklow.

4.3.1.1 Core Strategy

The strategic policies identified at a national, regional level are essential to informing the core strategy (Figure 4-1) of the CDP, which seeks;

“...to be a cohesive community of people enjoying distinct but interrelated urban and rural environments; where natural surroundings and surroundings and important resources are protected; where opportunities abound to live and work in a safe atmosphere, allowing people to enjoy the benefits of well paid jobs, a variety of housing choices, excellent public services, ample cultural and leisure opportunities, and a healthy environment.”



Figure 4-1 Extract from Wicklow County Development Plan (CDP) 2016-2022

4.3.1.2 Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy for County Wicklow is in accordance with the Core Strategy outlined above. It sets out the strategy for the future development of settlements and the rural area. In particular, it designates the role and function of each level within the Settlement Hierarchy.

Table 4-4 lists the relevant settlement associated with the Proposed Development, and each locations general role within the settlement strategy hierarchy.

Table 4-4 Primary Locations Associated with the Proposed Development

Location	Designation	Primary Role / Functions
Blessington	Level 4 – Moderate Growth Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metropolitan area, high quality linkages and increased densities at nodes on public transport corridors Prioritized for moderate growth and investment. Active town that acts as the service centre for a wide rural catchment
Lacken Ballyknockan Valleymount	Level 8 – Small Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small villages generally have a population of less than 100 with minimal facilities other than a public house, primary school or church. Acting as a place where the local rural community gathers and support the identity of this population. Having regard to their status on a lower tier of the settlement hierarchy, it is particularly important to safeguard their continued existence into the future, and to ensure that growth is encouraged and facilitated in a sustainable manner.
Baltyboys	Level 9 – Rural Cluster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable for very limited new rural development A role to designate rural housing into clusters rather than the open countryside.
All the rural area outside of the designated settlements.	Level 10 – Rural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms the 'open countryside' and includes all lands outside of the designated settlement boundaries. host to a range of activities, but not limited to; rural housing, rural recreational activities, agricultural, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture and fishing activities, rural tourism, rural enterprises, quarrying and extraction, landfill, wind farms etc. Protecting the natural environment is essential for the maintenance and protection of ecological biodiversity and landscape quality, as well as meeting climate change and green infrastructure aspirations.
*Tulfarris	<i>The Wicklow CDP does not explicitly refer to Tulfarris within its settlement strategy, however it is classed as a townland in the Central Statistic Office (CSO) (2016) Small Area Populations (SAP) with an estimated population of 90 persons. In should be noted, this townland increased by 57 persons between 2011 and 2016.</i>	

The Proposed Development does not prejudice or impact upon the settlement hierarchy, rather it connects these various designated areas' with infrastructure accessible year round to promote cycling and walking in a pleasant environment that also provides the opportunity for the spatial distribution of sustainable tourism and the associated economic benefits.

4.3.1.3 Economic Development

The CDP refers to maximising the value of Wicklow's status as the "Garden County". In addition, the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT) has devised the 'big idea' theme to rebrand Wicklow with a clear and consistent image, that highlights the characteristics Wicklow has to offer to potential investors, residents and tourists that differentiates it from other counties. The 'big Idea' is aligned with a marketing plan that further develops Wicklow's outdoor activities, while promoting niche tourism opportunities such as greenway projects.

In the context of the Proposed Development, relevant strategic objectives of the CDP include;

- To facilitate the expansion of existing and the development of new tourism and recreation related development, in line with the principles for sustainable tourism set out to follow;*
- To facilitate Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow County Tourism initiatives for the development of tourism in the County*
- To integrate the County's transport and tourism strategies to promote increasingly sustainable travel patterns among visitors to the County;*
- To identify strategic sites capable of accommodating new tourism ventures while also ensuring the preservation of the natural landscape of the area.*
- To protect Wicklow's principal strengths and capitalise on the distinct tourism and recreational attractions that are on offer – scenic beauty, woodlands and waterways, coastal areas and beaches, and built and natural heritage; and*
- To ensure a focus on high quality tourism and recreation facilities that are of benefit to visitors and the community alike.*

The Proposed Development fully aligned with the strategic objectives listed above providing benefits to local users, sustainable tourism opportunities and associated economic activity.

4.3.1.4 Tourism and Recreation

Tourism and recreation is an essential factor to the economic and social wellbeing of Wicklow. The CDP makes reference to an increasing income from tourists and visitors to Wicklow with a large proportion of income generated from overseas visitors.

Table 4-5 lists the relevant policies that are considered to be supportive of the Proposed Development.

Table 4-5 CDP Relevant Tourism and Recreational Policies and Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
T1	To promote, encourage and facilitate the development of the tourism and recreation sectors in a sustainable manner.	The Proposed Development is both a tourism and recreation asset designed to the natural environment, to promote the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area. The Greenway is proposed to be a signature Ireland's Ancient East visitor experience adding value to the existing venues in the surrounding counties and providing a 'West Wicklow bookend' to the East Wicklow Glendalough experience.
T2	To ensure that all tourism and recreation developments are designed to the highest quality and standards.	The Proposed Development offers a unique opportunity that will provide high quality infrastructure for sustainable tourism and recreational use. Designed in accordance with current best practice; it will follow the TII Publication 'DN-GEO-03047-02 – Rural Cycleway Design' as the design standard and full suite of relevant documentation to detail the design, construction and environmental impact of the Proposed Development has been completed to demonstrate its compliance with proper planning and sustainable development of the region.
T29	To support the development of new and existing walking, cycling and driving routes / trails, including facilities ancillary to trails (such as sign posting and car parks) and the development of linkages between trails in Wicklow and adjoining counties. In particular, to encourage and facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the expansion of the 'Blessington Greenway' walk around the Phoulaphuca reservoir; 	This objective directly references the Proposed Development and the desire to support development of new and existing walking and cycling routes and linkages between trails.
T34	To promote and encourage the recreational use of coastline, rivers and lakes and the development of 'blueways' ¹ in the County subject to normal environmental protection and management criteria.	The Proposed Development offers a unique opportunity that will utilize an area of sublime scenery. The surrounding environment offers exquisite natural and built heritage that will further promote and encourage physical activity in multiple forms of recreational sport.

The Proposed Development is fully compliant with the CDP's Tourism and Recreational policies and objectives as outlined in Table 4-5 above contributing significantly to the provision of sustainable infrastructure for the benefit of recreational and tourism.

4.3.1.5 Community Development

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides a stronger and clearer role for local government in economic and community development. One of the main means of achieving this is set out in the 'Action Programme for Effective Local Government – Putting People First', which sets out a clear focus on the importance of local government.

Table 4-6 lists the relevant policies that are considered to be supportive of the Proposed Development.

¹ Blueways are recreation and tourism initiatives centred on outdoor activity along the environs of waterways. Blueways provide opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities such as canoeing, cycling and walking.

Table 4-6 CDP Relevant Community Development Policies and Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
CD33	To provide for the development of facilities that contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the inhabitants of County Wicklow and facilitate participation in sport and recreation.	The Proposed Development will have significant potential in contributing to a healthier society for all ages through provision of year round facility that promotes physical activity and mental wellbeing through increase social interaction at all levels.
CD34	Through the local plan and Action Area Plan process to identify the need and designate suitable active open space for the provision and expansion of sport and recreation opportunities, commensurate with its needs and existing facilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Wicklow County Council Play, Sport & Recreation and Active Open Space policies.	The Blessington LAP has identified four Action Areas, the Proposed Development will bypass in close proximity to 3 of selected Action Areas, and while this will provide important cycling and walking infrastructure that would assist in connecting these surrounding areas, it will also promote alternative transports options to fully integrate these important community and open space areas.
CD35	Facilities for sports shall normally be located close to towns or villages, on designated Active Open Space land. All efforts will be required to be made to locate new sports facilities close to existing community facilities, schools or areas of dense residential development. The Council may consider providing sites for these purposes or may be prepared to make financial or other assistance available, subject to reasonable access being made available to the public and to reasonable safeguards for the continued use of the land as open space.	The Proposed integrated tourism and recreation Development will provide the space for sport – walking, running, cycling et al regardless of age or ability. In addition, the loop around Blessington lake provides for year round local access both from rural and more urban areas and connectivity between these.

With respect to the policies listed in Table 4-6 in relation to Community Development, the Proposed Development would fully satisfy these objectives of the CDP.

4.3.1.6 Infrastructure

Table 4-9 lists the relevant CDP Infrastructure policies and objectives to the Proposed Development.

Table 4-7 CDP Relevant Transport Policies and Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
TR9	To improve existing or provide new foot and cycleways on existing public roads, as funding allows.	The Proposed Development would directly and significantly enhance the peripheral areas of the Blessington lakes with the implementation of essential upgrades of existing and provision of new infrastructure.
TR11	To facilitate the development of foot and cycleways off road (e.g. through open spaces, along established rights-of-way etc), in order to achieve the most direct route to the principal destination (be that town centre, schools, community facilities or transport nodes), while ensuring that personal safety, particularly at night time, is of the utmost priority.	The Proposed Development will bypass 3 selected Action Areas in close proximity to Blessington Town Centre, and while this will provide important cycling and walking infrastructure that would assist in connecting these surrounding areas, it will also promote alternative transports options to fully integrate these important community and open space areas while improving the accessibility options for the surrounding area.
TR12	To encourage the provision of secure covered bicycle-parking facilities at strategic locations such as town centres, neighbourhood centres, community facilities and transport nodes.	The Proposed Development will include improvements to existing car park facilities comprising additional secured bicycle parking infrastructure.
TR13	To facilitate the development of a cycling and walking amenity routes throughout the County.	The Proposed Development will implement new cycling and walking infrastructure.

The Proposed Development is consistent with the transport policies and objectives of the CDP as listed in Table 4-9. A Transport Assessment has been completed for the Proposed Development and is included in the application package.

4.3.1.7 Heritage

Relevant CDP policies and objectives in relation to the built and natural heritage are considered below.

Natural Heritage

Natural heritage is often referred to as biodiversity, its physical or geological foundation, and the landscapes which form the surrounding environment. Wicklow supports a good diversity of natural and semi natural habitats such as marine, coastal, wetland, woodland, lake, river and uplands that in turn support a wide range of associated wild plant and animal species. There are also many geological heritage sites of interest in Wicklow which are an important element of the natural heritage. The conservation and management of the natural environment is a central element in the long term economic and social development of the County.

As referenced above a total of 6 sites designated as SAC or SPA and a total of 13 NHAs were recorded within 15km of the Proposed Development.

Table 4-8 considers the relevant Natural Heritage policies and objectives of the CDP.

Table 4-8 CDP Relevant Natural Heritage Policies and Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective	Compliance with Objective
NH4	All projects and plans arising from this plan ² (including any associated improvement works or associated infrastructure) will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.	A screening report for Appropriate Assessment (AA), was prepared by Flynn Furey Environmental Consultants. It assessed the potential for the Proposed Development to impact on the Natura 2000 network. The screening report concluded that impacts to the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA as a result of the Proposed Development construction could not be definitively ruled out. Consequently, a full AA was required and A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was prepared for the Proposed Development. The AA screening report and associated NIS is included in the planning application package and should be read in conjunction with all documents and plans.
NH5	To maintain the conservation value of all proposed and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and to protect other designated ecological sites ³ in Wicklow.	An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was prepared by Flynn Furey Environmental Consultants on behalf of the Applicant. The report describes the ecological surveys carried out to facilitate the planning, design and construction of the Proposed Development. The report concluded that through the implementation of a range of measures an overall increase in the diversity of habitats and species along the Proposed Development route should occur. The EclA is included in the planning application package and should be read in conjunction with all documents plans.
NH6	Ensure ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Annex I habitats, or rare and threatened species including those species protected by law and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.	As above.

With respect to the policies listed in Table 4-8, the Proposed Development would satisfy these objectives of the CDP.

Built Heritage

² Such projects include but are not limited to those relating to: agriculture; amenity and recreation; contaminated sites; electricity transmission; flood alleviation and prevention; forestry; mineral extraction; renewable energy projects; roads; telecommunications; tourism; wastewater and discharges; and water supply and abstraction.

³ Along with cSACs, SPAs and pNHA these include Salmonid Waters; Flora Protection Order sites; Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979); Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

The built heritage of Wicklow refers to all man-made features, buildings or structures in the environment. This includes a rich and varied archaeological and architectural heritage to be found throughout the countryside and within the historic towns and villages of the county.

Table 4-9 lists the relevant Built Heritage policies and objectives from the CDP. As noted above in section 3.2.3.2 there are a number of Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures within proximity of the Proposed Development.

Table 4-9 CDP Relevant Built Heritage Policies and Objectives

Policy Ref.	Objective
BH1	No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.
BH2	Any development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have implications for archaeological heritage shall be subject to an archaeological assessment.
BH3	To protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, including underwater sites, where they are discovered during development works.
BH8	To have regard to 'Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011) in the assessment of proposals affecting architectural heritage.
BH23	To facilitate access to and appreciation of areas of historical and cultural heritage, through the development of appropriate trails and heritage interpretation, in association with local stakeholders and site landowners, having regard to the public safety issues associated with such sites.

The Proposed Development does not conflict with the CDP policies noted above. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by AECOM on behalf of the Applicant to support this application. The AIA assesses the potential impact of the Proposed Development (including construction) on the setting of cultural heritage assets within the settings assessment study area which extends 100m from the scheme centre line. The report concluded that all predicted impacts associated with the Proposed Development will occur during the Construction phase and therefore temporary in nature with no impact during the operation phase.

4.3.1.8 Summary

A primary aim of the CDP is to promote, guide and enforce high quality standards of development for urban and rural areas throughout County Wicklow. The general emphasis is to enhance the quality of life, environment, community and economy in a manner that supports the sustainable development of the entire County. The concept, principles and design process of the Proposed Development has been outlined above as entirely compliant with the policies and objectives and the design standards set out in the CDP.

4.3.2 Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022

The Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022 represents a collaboration between local community development and local economic development for Co. Wicklow and reflects the strengthened role of the local authority in both areas of activity.

“Our Vision is for a County which provides a high quality of life and well-being for all; values socially inclusive urban and rural communities; is driven by a dynamic and innovative economy; promotes and prioritises sustainable development and protects and enhances the County’s unique and rich natural and cultural heritage”

A main element of the LECP has identified goals and objectives with the implementation of associated actions required to achieve these targets. In addition, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for Wicklow’s economic and community context is presented in the LECP and helped to inform the output of the LECP.

The high level goals developed for the purpose of the LECP outline the priority areas for the community and economic development of Wicklow over the lifetime of the LECP. The LECP has identified 10 high level goals that comprise a combination of community and social inclusion goals and economic and enterprise related goals. These goals address various aspects of social and economic development.

Of specific relevance to the Proposed Development is Goal 8, which aims to;

“Capitalise on Wicklow’s unique attributes and proximity to Dublin market, excellent quality of life, human capital, tourism, landscape, marine, agricultural and forestry resources.”

Objective 8.1 has been identified under Goal 8 and seeks to;

“Promote and direct the tourism development of the County in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects and enhances the County’s natural, built and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the County”

In addition, Objective 8.1 has recognised 16 actions that accompany Objective 8.1, of specific importance to the Proposed Development is;

Action 5, which aims to;

“Establish a dedicated Greenway Steering Group to develop a strategy for Greenways in the County including funding, promotion and development”

And Action 6, which aims to;

“Continue to examine how to advance Greenway and Blueway trails which create greater interlinkage of towns, villages and rural areas”

A critical element to the implementation of the LECP is to identify and implement actions that will be led by responsible agencies that will ensure they are executed under the plan. The agencies associated with implementing the above two actions are Wicklow County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Wicklow County Tourism and the County Wicklow Partnership. The findings of previous documents and the consultation process within Wicklow have helped to inform the output of the LECP.

In respect of this, the Proposed Development is considered fully compliant with the LECP Goal 8, in addition, its design principles offer an excellent opportunity to fully implement Action 6 of the LECP by enhancing the interlinkage of the surrounding areas.

4.3.3 Wicklow Tourism and Marketing Strategy Plan 2018-2023

The Wicklow Tourism and Marketing Strategy Plan (WTMSP) is the tourism strategy for the entire county of Wicklow. It sets out a vision of what can be achieved in Wicklow, with clear priorities and a series of detailed actions and next steps to ensure the County is realising its potential over the next 5 years (2018-2023). This strategy is for everyone involved in tourism in Wicklow. While there are some clear actions for public agencies, there are others which require the commitment of tourism businesses and local communities – all working together to ensure that Wicklow’s potential can be realised.

“Our vision is to make Wicklow the number one choice for visitors seeking an idyllic escape that harmonises a wide range of outdoor pursuits in County Wicklow’s world-class natural arena, while driving job creation in the local economy.”

The relevant strategic objectives of this strategy aim to;

- *Establish Wicklow as a year round destination*
- *Capture more overnight tourism*
- *Encourage the provision of alternative forms of accommodation*
- *Convert day visitors to staying visitors*
- *Integrate development of tourism infrastructure and assets*
- *Strategic approach to marketing & promotion*
- *Deliver sustainable development*

The Strategy has placed emphasis on developing new experiences that capitalise on the thematic strengths of Wicklow and which align with Ireland’s Ancient East. The development of the Blessington Greenway is explicitly referred to within this Strategy. Furthermore, this Strategy points to a variety of research, from Ireland and elsewhere, that validates the importance of developing such experiences for visitors.

The Strategy also states that in relation to visiting an attraction, visitors want to feel immersed in a place that is authentic, unique and distinctive. The Proposed Development offers a unique opportunity that will provide infrastructure for tourism and recreational use in an area of sublime scenery. In respect of the above, the Proposed Development is compliant with the Wicklow Tourism and Marketing Strategy Plan 2018-2023.

4.3.4 Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019

In regard to the Proposed Development transecting zoned lands within Blessington town, the Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019 has been assessed. While the end date of the LAP is noted as 2019, an extension to this LAP, applies under section 11C(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), specifically;

‘...shall continue to have effect to the extent provided for by that plan and be read together with the development plan for the administrative area within which the dissolved administrative area is situated.’

The LAP establishes a framework for the sustainable development of Blessington. The aim, to enhance and facilitate economic, social and environmental infrastructure without compromising the protection of the environment and the needs of future generations. It is an overarching objective of the LAP to identify the special characteristics of Blessington and develop objectives for any future development of the town, this includes the principle of pedestrian and cycle routes as identifiable in the zoning map in Figure 4-2.

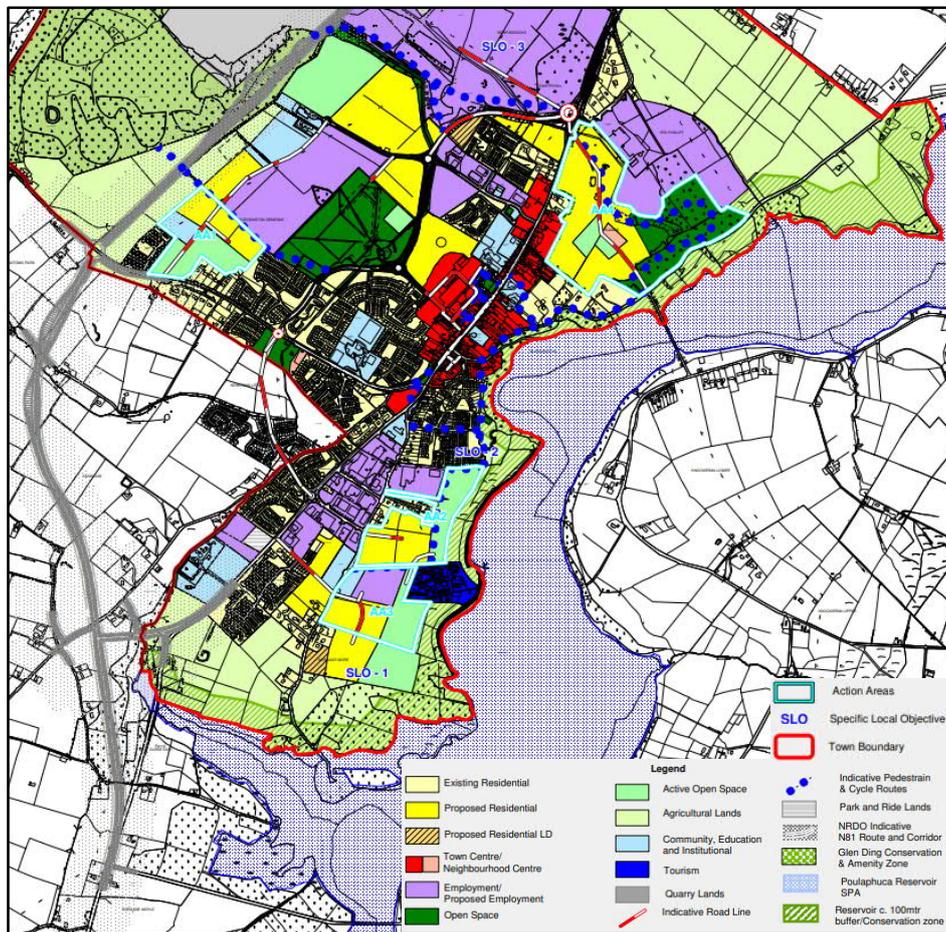


Figure 4-2 Extract from Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP) 2013-2019, Zoning Map

A list of predominant zoning designations and associated objectives from the LAP are included in Table 4-10.

Table 4-10 Relevant Zoning surrounding Proposed Development

Zoning	Objective
Existing Residential	Existing residential. To protect, provide and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located
Proposed Residential	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.

Zoning	Objective
Proposed Residential Low Density	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities at a lower density generally being 20/ha.
Town Centre	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic use, and to provide for 'Living Over the Shop' residential accommodation, or other ancillary residential accommodation.
Employment	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment.
Agriculture	To protect and provide for agriculture and amenity in a manner that protects the physical and visual amenity of the area and demarcates the urban and rural boundary.
Agriculture within 100m buffer	To provide a 100m buffer from the designated Poulaphouca Reservoir that protects the physical and visual amenity of the area
Tourism	To facilitate the provision of tourist based activities.
Open Space	To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and passive open space.

The LAP has also identified four Action Areas, these are highlighted in Figure 4-2. Of relevance, the location of Action Area 2, 3 and 4 are within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development. A summary of these Action Area proposals are listed below.

Action Area 2 - Lands at Burgage Mor (north of the Avon Ri Resort)

This Action Area is located at Burgage Mor, is accessed off the L-8858 Local Road and is bounded by the Avon Ri access driveway, existing residential development, employment lands and the lake shore. The overall area of this area is c. 9.4ha. The intended development for this Action Area aims to provide a mixed use Residential Development (5.48ha) and Active Open Space (3.95ha) area.

Action Area 3 – Lands at Burgage More

This Action Area is also located at Burgage Mor, is accessed off the L-8858 Local Road and is bounded by the Avon Ri access drive to the north and east, existing agricultural lands to the south and the local road to the west. The overall area of this area is c.10.3ha. The intended development for this Action Area aims to provide a mixed residential (3.558ha), employment (2.577ha), community (0.8ha) and active open space (3.352ha).

Action Area 4 – Lands at Doran’s Pit

This Action Area is located at Holyvalley (Doran’s Pit) is accessed directly off the N81 and is bounded by the existing mart site to the north, existing forestry and agricultural lands to the east and south and existing residential development to the south west. The N81 runs along the northern section of the western boundary, with the L-4371 (Kilbride Road) running along the south east of the subject lands. The subject lands measure a total of c 29.81ha and aims to provide for mixed residential development (17.01ha), community/local neighbourhood centre uses (0.5ha), equipped play spaces (1.5ha) and open space and amenity use in the form of a woodland Park (10.8ha).

The development of this Action Area plan offers significant opportunities to link the L-4371 – Kilbride Road and the L-4372 Blessington Bridge to the N81 directly and sit at a prominent location acting as a gateway into the town of Blessington. The proximity to the lakeshore and the potential tourism value of this site is also recognised.

The Proposed Development will bypass in close proximity to the above Action Areas, and while this will provide important cycling and walking infrastructure that would assist in connecting these surrounding areas, it will also promote alternative transports options to fully integrate these important community and open space areas.

In addition to these Action Areas, the LAP provides three Specific Local Objectives (SLO) for the LAP area. The purpose of these SLO’s is to direct development of certain lands where more than one land use is proposed. The Proposed Development will pass within proximity to SLO 1 and SLO 2, the objectives associated with these specific areas are listed below;

Specific Local Objective (SLO) 1:

“Lands to the south of Action Area 3 shall be developed in a manner which provides for a mix of housing (c. 3.348ha at 28/ha) with the main point of access being provided through Action Area 3. The development of these lands shall be carried out in conjunction with the laying out of lands to the east for Active Open Space (c. 3.646ha) to an appropriate standard capable of accommodating such activities i.e. levelled and drained. Low density housing at a maximum density of 20/ha shall be provided on c. 1ha of

land adjoining the L-8858 in keeping with the existing neighbouring developments and in recognition of the rural nature of this area.”

Specific Local Objective (SLO) 2:

“This objective promotes and aims to facilitate the redevelopment of the open space areas located to the east of the existing Carrig Glen Estate. The redevelopment of this area shall be carried out in consultation with the local community, Community and Enterprise, Housing and Planning sections of Wicklow County Council and comprise of a redeveloped open space area orientated in a manner capable of being passively supervised by adjoining dwellings that shall include a new playing field, a redeveloped hard surfaced play area to the rear of the housing at lakeview, the potential redevelopment of the former scouts building and the continuation of the proposed pedestrian and cycle route from Action Area 2 through to the L4371 Road.”

The Proposed Development would provide essential infrastructure upgrades that would encourage walking and cycling by providing high quality walking and cycling routes.

The LAP identifies the enormous potential for the enhancement to amenity walks and cycle routes around the lakeshore of Poulaphouca reservoir and the surrounding area without detriment to its designation as a Special Protection Area under the EU Habitats and Proposed Natural Heritage Area status.

“In recognition of the amenity and habitat value of the lakeshore, a 100m buffer zone has been provided along the eastern boundary of the plan area aimed at preserving the scenic and ecological value of this area. Lands within this buffer have been zoned agriculture in recognition of these existing activities however within this zone the plan will facilitate and encourage the development of walking and cycling routes and other tourist related activities subject to such developments meeting the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive.”

The LAP refers to the government policy; ‘Smarter Travel - A New Transport for Ireland 2009-2020’, which places an emphasis on walking and cycling as alternatives to vehicular transport as highlighted above in detail. The LAP has recognised that the provision of walking and cycling routes in Blessington form an essential part of the transport system. In addition, the LAP has highlighted;

“While the land-use plan cannot influence whether members of the public will walk or cycle to a destination it can include objectives that would promote these forms of transport.”

The LAP further stated that there are areas where footpaths require significant improvement, in particular, in the town centre. It also states that footpaths are lacking in some peripheral areas of Blessington and specifically inadequate around the Poulaphouca reservoir. The Proposed Development would directly and significantly enhance Blessington town and the peripheral areas of Blessington with the implementation of essential upgrades to the existing and provision of new infrastructure.

4.4 Policy Summary

Section 4 of this planning statement has highlighted the Proposed Development is compliant with planning policies at a national, regional and local level. The Proposed Development would greatly enhance the existing amenities of the area and provide high quality designed facilities for all users. In addition, the policies referred to confirm the enormous potential, that cycling and walking has as a tourism asset directly and indirectly as well as recreational activity for local residents. These are the building blocks required to boost a culture of cycling and walking as an alternative transport mode to achieve the target of becoming less car dependent.

5 Supporting Documents

In addition to the Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Transport Assessment and Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) referenced in section 4.3.1 regarding compliance with the policies and objectives of the CDP a number of other detailed assessments have been carried out as detailed below.

5.1 Arboricultural Survey and Assessment

An Arboricultural Survey and Assessment (ASA) prepared by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants concluded that approximately 7,265 trees will be required to be removed to facilitate the greenway. This relatively high number is due to the considerable amount of conifer plantation, where trees occur in long stretches and in high densities along the proposed route.

Tree management activities undertaken on behalf of the ESB typically involve the clear felling of between 1,750 and 2,500 trees every 2/3 years. The ESB also conducts thinning activities which typically involves the removal of 75 to 225 trees every 2/3 years. Thus, tree felling occurs in this area as part of routine tree management activities.

The project will replace the approximately 7,265 trees that will be required to be felled to facilitate the scheme. This will involve planting new native species tree along the route in ESB lands (approximately 2,300 trees at 10 m centres over approx. 23 km), and new planting in lands adjacent to scheme owned by Wicklow County Council (at Knockieran Car Park, Burgage area and the Avon area) which will accommodate 4,965 trees.

5.2 Construction Environmental Management Plan

An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Outline CEMP) was prepared by AECOM, on behalf of the Applicant. The Outline CEMP sets out the procedures, standards, work practices and management responsibilities to address potential environmental effects that may arise from the Proposed Development.

The Outline CEMP outlines the approach that will be adopted to environmental management throughout the Project works at the Site, with the primary aim of reducing any adverse effects from construction on the environment. It could therefore form part of the Contract Documents for the construction stage. The Outline CEMP remains at all times a live document, subject to amendment including the revision and addition of content throughout the works.

6 Community Engagement

6.1 Project Inception

As reference in section 2.1 above, in 2010 the local community body, Blessington & District Forum, commissioned a Feasibility Study on Recreation Opportunities at Poulaphouca Reservoir. This identified a potential "Flagship Project". It recommended the provision of a surfaced multipurpose walking and cycling trail circling the main Reservoir adjacent to the shoreline. It also identified a proposed first phase from Blessington to Russborough. This phase was developed by the Forum with strong support from the local community and the Local Authority.

The preparations for this work included a comprehensive survey of opinion carried out by the local Parish and a public meeting. An overseas study trip to a UK Greenway development was arranged and inter alia had Failte Ireland, Wicklow County Council, County Wicklow Tourism and the main landowner (ESB) personnel involved.

Phase 1 of the Greenway covers 6kms in distance. It was officially launched on 1 February 2014 by the then Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Leo Varadkar TD. At the launch of Phase 1 Minister Varadkar said that walking and cycling tourism represents an area with massive growth potential. *"This is just the first phase of a great project to run a new Greenway right around Blessington Lakes. It's a good example of how community spirit can make things happen"*.

6.2 Greenway – Part VIII

The Part VIII Planning approval for an earlier version of the Proposed Development involved extensive and detailed consultation with the local community. In 2017, there was a widespread dissemination of the Council's proposals and a public meeting was convened. This meeting, which was held in Valleymount Village, was attended by

landowners, local community groups and individuals, along with Council Staff and the main landowner, the ESB. During the public consultation process for the Part VIII planning permission, 278 favourable submissions were received from the public. The project was passed unanimously by the County Councillors who were present at the Wicklow County Council meeting of 3rd July 2017. The planning documents for this process were made available at the Wicklow County Council offices in Blessington and Wicklow Town to the members of the public. These planning documents were also accessible on-line.

6.3 Project Updates

The Wicklow County Council's official newsletter editions for Spring, Winter and Autumn 2019 contained information on the progression of the project. This newsletter is available on-line and over 44,000 copies are delivered to homes and businesses in the County.

Project updates have continued right through the past year during the public health restrictions for the Covid-19 pandemic. These include updates to the Blessington Town Team which includes local Councillors and representatives from Blessington and District Community Forum, Tidy Towns and the West Wicklow Business Network. Similarly, the Council's Municipal District meetings - which are open to the public and media - have received briefings on the progress of the project.

7 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated through this report and accompanying documentation that the proposed development of a Greenway around Blessington Lake meets and positively supports the objectives and policies of national, regional and local plans and through effective mitigation will not result in any adverse impact on any feature(s) of acknowledged importance.

The signature Ireland Ancient East project has multiple benefits for locals through unlimited access to high quality recreational infrastructure to enhance health and social/ community interaction and mental wellbeing. Sustainable tourism through integration of tourism venues as well as the natural and built heritage, providing a facility to encourage the spatial distribution of tourism and associated economic benefit across the region as well as County Wicklow specifically.

The Proposed Development is very clearly in the interest of the common good, in compliance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the Blessington area and acceptable on environmental grounds, therefore it is requested An Bord Pleanála approve this application.

Appendix A Planning History

Table 7-1 Relevant Planning History of Subject site

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
201044	Humphreystown, Valkeymount, Co. Wicklow	for the removal of existing septic tank, installation of new wastewater treatment unit, sand polishing filter to current standards and associated works	Approved Conditionally 10/12/2020	21/01/2026
219	Burgage More, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	amendment to previously approved planning application (Planning Ref 19/693). The proposed amendment consists of the relocation of the ESB Substation, onto the northern site boundary of the development as required by ESB Networks; 1.8m high enclosure walls to substation in finishes to match approved dwellings as well as all associated and ancillary site and ground works	Approved Conditionally 23/02/2021	n/a
20119	Avon Ri, Blessington Lakeshore, Burgage, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	outdoor activity area comprising a zipline and climbing wall (with associated steel structure that includes toilets, storage areas and terraces), archery area, general activity space, 2 no steel storage units, and all associated activity areas, landscaping, boundary treatment and ancillary works	Refused 15/10/2020	n/a
20357	Villa Maria, Kilbride Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	new entrance gate, refurbishment of the existing house, demolition of 'front porch' and side conservatory and the construction of a new single story extension to the front, two story extension to the side and extension at first floor to the rear of the house along with all associated site works including a new effluent treatment system	Approved Conditionally 31/08/2020	05/10/2025
20262	20 Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	LICENCE UNDER SECTION 254 hoarding outside construction site	Approved Conditionally 15/06/2020	n/a
19510	Spruce Wood Cottage, Kilbride Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	existing two storey extension the western elevation of the existing dwelling. PERMISSION for an extension to the existing dwelling connecting the existing garage to the existing dwelling including a reconfiguration of the ground floor layout and conversion of the existing garage for habitable use. 2. A new detached garage to serve the existing dwelling 3. A small family cluster housing development comprising of 4 no. two storey dwelling units and associated garage for each dwelling 4. The decommissioning of the existing septic tank and the connection of the existing dwelling and proposed 4 new family dwellings to the existing public water sewer, water supply and all associated site development works	Approved Conditionally 02/04/2020	29/06/2025
191095	Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	change of use of existing ground floor public house with first floor hair salon and residence to three number retail units at ground floor with 2 no two bed apartments at first floor along with minor alterations to the front façade and a vehicular access to the rear of the site along with all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 25/03/2020	23/06/2025
191013	Villa Maria, Kilbride Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	front and side single storey extensions to existing two storey house and all associated site development works	Approved Conditionally 20/12/2019	29/01/2025
19850	Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolition of rear section of existing main mixed use building and store / garage to rear, change of use of an existing property (takeaway and residential uses) to bookmakers office on the ground floor with a single storey extension (bookmakers office) to the rear of the main existing building, alterations to the existing shop front and all associated site development works	Approved Conditionally 13/12/2019	23/01/2025
19693	Burgage More, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolition of existing agricultural shed (14 sqm) and the construction of 56 no residential units (2 no 4 bed houses, 49 no 3 bed houses, 3 no 2 bed houses and 2 no 2 bed apartments), 113 no ancillary car parking spaces, hard and soft landscaping, lighting, balconies facing northeast and	Approved Conditionally 26/11/2019	11/05/2025

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
		southwest, solar panels, boundary treatments, ESB substation, changes in level, and all associated site development works above and below ground		
19681	Shroughan, Lacken, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	farm access roadway and trailer compound along with all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 09/10/2019	13/11/2024
19284	Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	single storey extension to side and rear of cottage and upgrade existing septic tank to a Tricel Treatment Plant with sand and soil polishing filter	Approved Conditionally 26/04/2019	29/05/2024
1951	Texaco Service Station, N81 Road, Burgage More, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	extension and alterations to building at Texaco Service Station. The development will consist of construction of a single storey extension (104.4 sqm) to existing service station building giving a total new floor area of 224 sqm. This increased service building will include retail area of 100 sqm, new café / food use seating area at 28 sqm, new Deli counter (42 sqm) and back of house / ancillary areas (57 sqm). Relocation of main entrance door to a double sliding door within a new glazed screen to the north / east facing elevation. Addition of new windows to the north / west facing elevation. Additional shop signage throughout the revised and extended building. Demolition of existing shed (plant room) and relocation of plant room, 8 sqm. Ancillary site works to include removal of container store to the south west elevation, relocation of car wash area and line marking of three additional car spaces (one of which is a disabled space), all within associated site works and alterations	Approved Conditionally 18/04/2019	29/05/2024
18514	Butterhill, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	part single storey, part storey and a half dwelling with a single storey garage along with a wastewater treatment system and soil polishing filter and all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 24/01/2019	03/03/2024
171215 ABP-302615-18	Burgage Moyle, Off the R758 , Blessington, Co. Wicklow	high performance training centre including the following:- (i) single storey boathouse (1598 sqm) with eleven bays for rowing boats (ii) two storey attached ancillary building (729 sqm), housing launch boat area, with 8 bays for safety boats, equipment store, boiler room and water storage on ground floor, with changing areas, gym, meeting rooms, and balcony / terrace at first floor level (iii) new vehicular access from R758 with vehicular and pedestrian access points, gates and pillars (iv) footpaths to boathouses, club house and lake edge (v) 78 car parking spaces and (vi) drainage including sealed steel effluent holding tank, oil and petrol interceptor holding tank, surface water attenuation, all site development works including fencing, hard and soft landscaping. A Natura Impact Statement has been submitted as part of the application	Approved Conditionally 27/08/2018 Appealed to ABP 26/09/2018 Approved Conditionally 12/06/2019	11/06/2024
18695	Church of Our Lady, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	internal alterations to provide for a new counselling room at first floor level over the existing sacristy area and provision of a new window at first floor level to the rear elevation	Approved Conditionally 03/08/2018	16/09/2023
18375	Blessington Sailing Club, Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	2 x 40 ft and 1 x 30 ft storage containers to provide storage for rowing boats and related rowing training equipment required for the purposes of leisure, training and competitive racing	Approved Conditionally 30/05/2018	10/07/2023
171244	The Stone Cottage, Humphreystown, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	two storey domestic extension, ancillary site works, as well as minor alterations to the existing roof and elevations	Approved Conditionally 31/01/2018	13/03/2023
171302	O'Horas, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	44.55 sqm attic floor apartment to include 4 no roof skylights to rear and permission sought to provide for new entrance door to the apartment on front elevation together with all associated site works	Refused 07/12/2017	n/a

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
171021	Burgage, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolition of existing single storey dwelling and detached shed and the erection of a proposed new replacement dormer dwelling, new connection to public sewer and all ancillary and associated site works	Approved Conditionally 13/10/2017	21/11/2022
1726	Knockieran Cottage, Knockieran Lower, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	subdivision and conversion of an existing single and two storey agricultural outbuilding to provide 5 no holiday home / self-catering units (3 no one bed roomed and 2 no two bed roomed) to include modifications to existing elevations, the provision of rooflights, a wastewater treatment system and all associated site works	Refused 20/09/2017	n/a
17895	Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	2 storage containers, to be used for the storage of lifesaving and water safety training equipment	Approved Conditionally 05/09/2017	05/10/2022
17762	Burgage Moyle, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	existing domestic unit with kitchen, toilet facilities, living accommodation and associated services building, the existing wastewater treatment facilities, a domestic garage, upgraded vehicular entrance and all associated site development works and services. Retention is also sought to temporarily retain existing mobile home for a period of 5 years. Permission is sought for an extension to the front of the domestic unit to provide additional living accommodation and to upgrade the existing wastewater treatment facilities and all associated site development works and services	Refused 16/08/2017 Appealed to ABP 15/09/2017 Refused by ABP 14/02/2018	n/a
17631	St Mary's Junior National School, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	two new classrooms and two new resource rooms at first floor level over the 1936 old school building to the south west side of the campus. There is a protected structure within the curtilage of this site	Approved Conditionally 21/07/2017	24/08/2022
17581 PL27.249010	Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	2 no independent buildings comprising of (1) 4 no 2 bed dwellings with enclosed terrace at attic level, 10 no car parking spaces, all to the rear (2) 2 no ground floor commercial units with associated signage and 2 no 1 bed apartments over with rear balconies to replace derelict building to be demolished and all to the front and associated site works	Approved Conditionally 10/07/2017 Appealed to ABP 09/08/2017 Approved Conditionally by ABP 08/02/2018	07/02/2023
16293 27.247511	Burgage Moyle, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	fully serviced dormer type dwelling, to upgrade existing sewerage treatment facilities and all ancillary site works. Retention is sought for domestic unit with kitchen and toilet facilities, vehicular entrance and existing sewerage treatment facilities. Permission for Retention is also sought to temporarily retain existing mobile home	Refused 10/10/2016 Appealed to ABP 02/11/2016 Refused by ABP 16/03/2017	n/a
15963	Baltyboys Lower (Boystown), Valleymount, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	hardcore surfaced access road	Approved Conditionally 05/10/2016	n/a
16766	Ulster Bank, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow W91 E12F	alterations to the existing ATM aperture within the protected structure to accommodate the installation of a new ATM.	Approved Conditionally 22/08/2016	04/10/2021
151244 PL.27.246217	Lacken, Co. Wicklow	lean to structural steel shed of 125 sqm which is joined to an existing structural steel shed of 291.4 sqm. The structure for retention will be for use and support of sheep farming	Refused 01/02/2016 Appealed to ABP 02/03/2016 Approved Conditionally by ABP 16/05/2016	15/05/2021

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
151218	Burgage Moyle, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	(1) Planning permission for the erection of a fully services dormer type dwelling, to upgrade existing sewerage treatment facilities & all ancillary site works. (2) Permission for Retention is sought for domestic unit with kitchen & toilet facilities, vehicular entrance & existing sewerage treatment facilities. (3) Permission for Retention is also sought to temporarily retain existing mobile home	Refused 28/01/2016	n/a
15838	Blessington Industrial Estate, Burgage More, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	lean-to shed to the side of existing building along with full planning permission for the following: 1. A change of use of existing industrial unit to a funeral home and joinery workshop. 2. Modifications to all external elevations. 3. The construction of a porch area to the front elevation. 4. Lowering of part of existing boundary wall and the erection of rails to the perimeter along with an increase in parking area. 5. Decommissioning of existing septic tank and percolation area and a new connection to the existing main foul sewer line and all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 07/01/2016	09/02/2021
15544	Glebe East, Poulaphouca Road, Blessington, Co. Kildare.	Of: (a) Single storey extensions to side and rear of an existing bungalow. (b) The infill of existing covered front porch, along with associated site development and facilitating works	Approved Conditionally 28/10/2015	08/12/2020
15617	Quidara, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	the construction of a two storey house with attached garage and all ancillary works on the site of a former dwelling (which was demolished - under the previous grant of permission register reference 14/1597)	Approved Conditionally 29/07/2015	01/09/2020
15357	Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	development consist/consists of 3 (three) storage containers, to be used for the storage of lifesaving and water safety training equipment.	Approved Conditionally 23/06/2015	26/07/2020
15375	Kenny's Kitchen, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	additional use of bakery/cafe (granted under registered reference 13/8294) to provide for a take-away/restaurant	Approved Conditionally 02/06/2015	05/07/2020
141070	Knockieran Cottage, Knockieran Lower, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	for the demolition of a small single storey extension with a floor area of 8.78sqm at the rear of our existing dwelling, to be replaced by a single storey extension with a floor area of 56.2sqm giving a new combined total floor area of 246.5sqm at our dwelling	Approved Conditionally 26/02/2015	29/03/2020
142131	Quidara, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	amendments to approved plan (planning ref. 14/1597) to include increased area of single storey sections and repositioning house on site	Refused 29/01/2015	n/a
142104	Lacken, Co. Wicklow	change of use of existing agricultural building to a storage facility for the storing of equipment associated with water and local leisure sports. The approx area of the buildings is 115.2sqm.	Refused 26/01/2015	n/a
142026	Lacken, Co. Wicklow	lean to structural steel shed of 125sqm which is joined to an existing structural steel shed of 291.4sqm. The structure for retention will be for the use and support of sheep farming	Refused 23/12/2014	n/a
141927	Knockkieran Lower, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	entrance gate (using pre-existing field gate), new driveway and use of former entrance for pedestrian access only. Planning permission is sought for the proposed demolition of existing single storey extension, 2 no. existing chimneys and part demolition of existing single storey shed. Construction of proposed new single storey extension to the rear, single storey bay window extension to side and new/altered window and door openings to side and front elevations, new corrugated metal roof to part of existing shed being retained. Works to include new rooflights and solar panels on rear and side roofs, together with the upgrade of existing effluent disposal system to current EPA standards and all associated site drainage and landscaping works.	Approved Conditionally 04/12/2014	19/01/2020
141878	Weavers Cottage,	for a change of use from a hostel to a residential dwelling and all associated site works	Approved Conditionally	11/01/2020

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
	Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow		11/11/2014	
141383	Church of Our Lady, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	(i) a proposed new single storey sacristy extension to the rear of the existing Church located in the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area (ii) associated alterations to the existing landscaping and paving areas (iii) associated site works	Approved Conditionally 19/09/2014	12/01/2020
138895	Park View House, Baltinglass Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	the development will consist of 1. retention of plan and elevation changes including 25.2sqm gross internal additional development to south west elevation to previously approved planning reg 99/413 which includes laundry room, wc, conservatory and balcony. 2 permission for a change of use from 2 no. commercial shop units to 2 no. 2 bedroom apartments within the curtilage of a large private dwelling	Approved Conditionally 03/09/2014	05/10/2019
138258	Humphrystown, Vallemount, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	single storey extension to the side and rear of existing cottage, upgrading of existing septic tank and percolation area to an onsite water treatment system with soil polishing filter along with the construction of a vehicular entrance to the east of the site and all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 02/09/2014	05/10/2019
141597	Quidara, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolish existing two storey house and garage, construct replacement two storey house and garage on site with extended boundary and provide for new vehicular access and all ancillary works	Approved Conditionally 27/08/2014	30/09/2019
141426	100 Burgage Manor, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	for the construction of a 16.3sqm single storey extension to the side of the existing house and to include a velux to the rear and all associated site works	Approved Conditionally 10/07/2014	12/08/2019
141010	Gaelscoil Na Lochanna, Cill Moloma, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	an advertisement structure -Signpost Number 1(traffic island to the northwest of roundabout at Burgage (N81)	Approved Conditionally 27/02/2014	n/a
138831	St. Marys Junior National School, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	single storey administration and staff room extension to the western side of the main entrance area	Approved Conditionally 20/02/2014	23/03/2019
138277 27.242862	Blessington, Co. Wicklow	the installation of a 5.3m x 1.9m x2.5m high stainless steel and glass bus shelter with 2 no. internally illuminated advertising panels each of 2 sq. metre area at existing bus stop no. 4051	Approved Conditionally 06/12/2013 Appealed to ABP 10/01/2014 Approved Conditionally by ABP 27/03/2014	16/04/2019
171116	Blessington Demesne, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	extend the appropriate period of a permission - 01/4436 - new town centre development	Refused 06/12/2017	
138803	West Wicklow House, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	p.r.r. 08/2145 (39sqm sunroom to the side of existing public house and minor alterations to existing bar on ground floor, change of use of part of first floor from residential to commercial)	Approved Conditionally 03/12/2013	29/06/2014
138294	Kenny's Kitchen, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	change of use of ground floor from shop to bakery / cafe, change of use of first floor from office to a residential two bedroom apartment, minor alterations to the two storey building to that which was granted under planning reference 06/6368 including 17 sqm additional ground floor space to the rear of the unit with two no balconies overhead	Approved Conditionally 02/12/2013	12/01/2019

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
138703	Blessington Further Education Centre, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	2.07m x 2.0m advertising sign located on Wicklow VEC Further education centre Blessington lands at the junction of the Baltinglass road (N81) and the Troopersfield road (L8858)	Refused 04/11/2013	n/a
138095	Lacken, Co. Wicklow	lean to structural steel shed of 125 sqm which is joined to an existing structural steel shed of 291.4 sqm. The structure for retention will be for use and support of sheep farming	Refused 18/10/2013	n/a
138203	Church of Our Lady, Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	(1) proposed new single storey Parish Centre (to be named 'The Coimin Centre') to adjoin the existing church located in the Blessington Architectural Conservation Area (2) Alterations to the existing landscaping and paved areas (3) associated site works (4) construction of a new entrance and bell tower on the north corner of the existing church and the modification of the existing entrance on the north eastern corner of the church	Approved Conditionally 24/06/2013	06/08/2018
126590	Baltyboys, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	single storey extension to front and side of cottage	Refused 06/09/2012	n/a

Table 7-2 Relevant Part 8 application Search

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status
17307	Blessington, Co. Wicklow	Greenway. Construct a new crushed stone track in order to create a walking & cycling greenway which will follow the edge of the Blessington Lakes together with the upgrading of the existing tracks commencing in the town of Blessington and following a route close to the shoreline through the townlands of Baltyboys Lower, Tulfarris, Rathballylong, Baltyboys Upper, Monamuck, Valleymount, Annacarney, Carrigacurra, Ballyknockan, Ballynastockan, Lacken, Sroughan, Carrig, Knockieran Upper, Knockieran Lower, Blessington and Burgage More and the villages of Valleymount, Ballyknockan and Lacken before returning to Blessington at Knockieran Bridge. Upgrading works will include widening of existing track and laying of geotextile with a surface layer of crushed stone surface. Construction works will involve shallow excavation, laying of geotextile with a surface layer of crushed stone surface, placement of approx. 100 culverts, 18 light bridges over larger streams, fencing and minor landscaping.	Received 23/03/2017

Table 7-3 Relevant Extended Planning History

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
20108	The Rectory, Kilbride Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolition of a 1.5 storey derelict outbuilding (within the curtilage of a protected structure) and for the construction of 45 no residential units, maintaining the existing Rectory building (protected structure) as a residential house as is, maintaining the existing Mass Path, a communal pedestrian footpath extending towards Main Street, a communal cycle lane and a communal pedestrian footpath beyond the south eastern boundary wall and adjacent to Kilbride Road, 81 no car parking spaces, renovation and relocation of the derelict eastern entrance pier and wall (within the curtilage of a protected structure), widening of existing gate / entrance plus new pedestrian gate and improved access to existing Mass Path, new front boundary wall and railing, drainage infrastructure, landscaping, services and all associated works	Approved Conditionally 31/07/2020	03/09/2025
20713	Santryhill, Newpaddocks & Dillonsdown Townlands, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	use of an existing internal haul road at Doran's pit, Blessington for the importation of inert soil and stone waste for backfilling and restoration / recovery at a soil recovery facility to be established at Redbog Pit in Co. Kildare. The proposed haul road extends over 2.9 hectares, from an existing junction with the N81 National Secondary Road at Santryhill townland and through the townlands of Newpaddocks and Dillonsdown to the county boundary with Co. Kildare. Planning permission is sought for a period of 30 years. The proposed soil waste recovery facility at	Received 24/07/2020 Request for Further Information Application On-hold	n/a

Planning Ref. No.	Development Address	Development Proposal	Status	Expiry
		Redbog Pit requires a waste licence from the Environmental Protection Agency. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will be submitted to the Planning Authority in connection with the application		
19693	Burgage More, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	demolition of existing agricultural shed (14 sqm) and the construction of 56 no residential units (2 no 4 bed houses, 49 no 3 bed houses, 3 no 2 bed houses and 2 no 2 bed apartments), 113 no ancillary car parking spaces, hard and soft landscaping, lighting, balconies facing northeast and southwest, solar panels, boundary treatments, ESB substation, changes in level, and all associated site development works above and below ground	Approved Conditionally 26/11/2019 Approved Conditionally by ABP 12/05/2020	11/05/2025
SH202001	Kilmalum Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow & Co. Kildare	application to ABP for a Strategic Housing Development which consists of the following: 360 no. dwelling units in a mix of houses, duplexes and apartment units ranging from 2 to 3 storeys, including associated car parking spaces, internal roads and paths, public and private open spaces and a crèche. Out of the 360 residential units, 36 no. units are dedicated to met the applicant's obligations under Part V of the Planning & Development Act. Each unit has associated private open space, as well as public open spaces accessible to all units with hard and soft landscaping treatment. Balconies are to be provided in the apartment blocks T1, T2, I1, U2 and U3 and terraces are provided at first and second floor of duplex types P, R and S. The proposed development includes for measures to upgrade the Blessington Orchard/Kilmalum Road and Culvert over the Deerpark Watercourse, from the Roundabout junction of Kilmalum Road with Kilmalum Crescent to the culver over the Deerpark Watercourse and these works are to comprise replacement of existing dished curb and crossing, with a new ramp pelican pedestrian crossing, a cycle track adjacent to Kilmalum Road to improve pedestrian and cycle connections into the subject site to and from Blessington connecting into an existing footpath at Kilmalum Road, underground connection to the existing watermain, upgrade to the existing pipe culvert within the proposed open space of the subject site and proposed culvert beneath Blessington Orchard Road/Kilmalum Road. 490 car parking space, 130 shared spaces , with 7 disables car parking spaces and 45 visitor spaces, giving an overall 675 car parking spaces. Residential bicycle spaces with a further 114 bicycle spaces provided throughout the development for apartment, duplexes and visitor spaces. A two storey crèche (approx. 476.5sqm) with approx. 730 sqm of outdoor play area with a capacity for 80 no. children. associated car parking for the crèche. 1 no. vehicular access and 2 no. pedestrian access. Pedestrian connections to the adjoining residential development at Blessington Manor via per every 2 units. Associated site and infrastructural works including ESB substations, foul and surface water drainage, attenuation tanks, landscaping, boundary walls and fences, internal road, cyclepaths and footpaths. All on lands measuring C. 11.83 hectares. A NIS has been prepared in respect of the proposed development.	Live SHD Application	n/a
16811	Zone 2, Blessington Demesne, Blessington, Co. Wicklow	a signalised pedestrian crossing on the Blessington inner relief road at Blessington demesne, Blessington, co. Wicklow. the proposed crossing is approximately 25m from the existing roundabout (northern arm) which is located approximately 165m west of the town centre & will consist of traffic lights on both sides of the road, dropped kerbs & associated road markings. a courtesy crossing point is also proposed on the eastern arm of the existing roundabout which includes dropped kerbs. the application also seeks permission to alter condition 3 & 18 of reg. ref: 00/3687 (extended through reg. ref: 12/6585) which restrict the construction & occupation of homes.	Approved Conditionally 12/10/2016	15/11/2021

