



Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual
Name:	Stephen Deegan
Reference:	DBLESSLAP-144918
Submission Made	December 4, 2024 2:58 PM

File

Blessington LAP Sports.docx, 0.61MB

To whom it concerns

Figure 1. Blessington proposed land use map

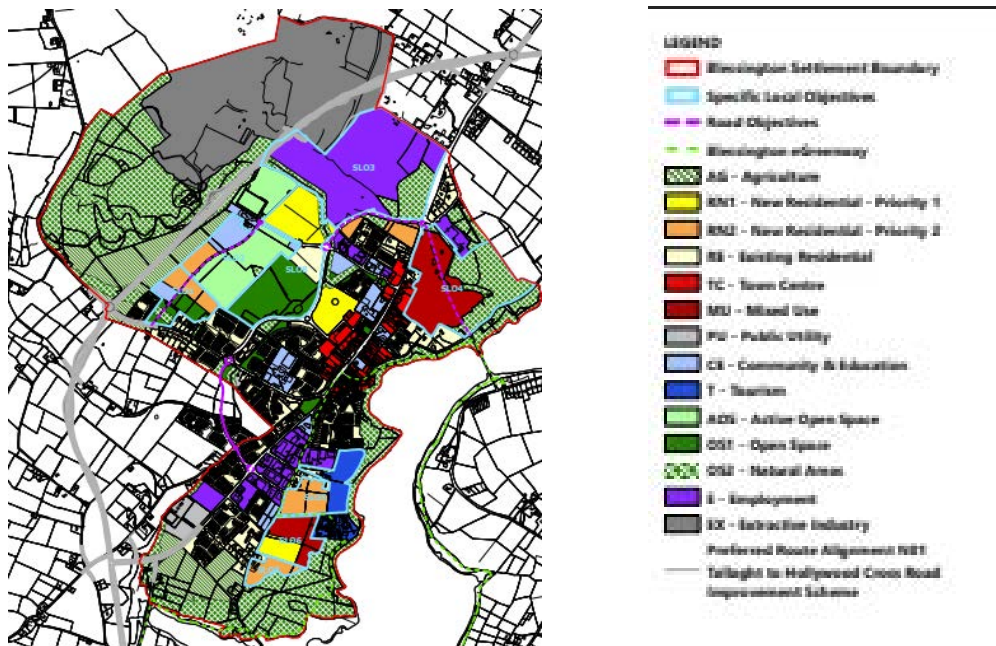
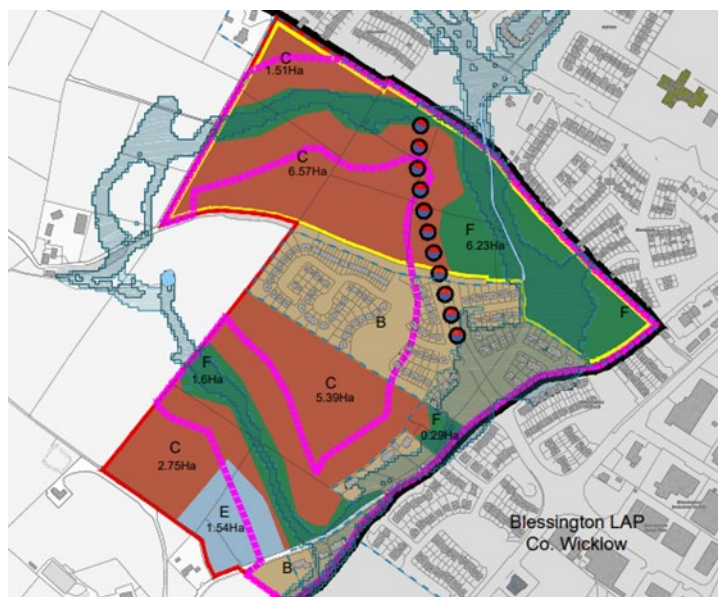


Figure 2 Kildare County Council current land use zoning



The Wicklow County Council Blessington LAP Map and the Kildare County Council zoning map for Blessington are lacking in vision required for a modern vibrant town when it comes to community, sports and recreation infrastructure..

Blessington LAP Map.

The land use zonings for Blessington are:

1. **Agriculture.** Important in the context that the bypass has not been delivered and it would be wrong to zone any lands along the route in advance of final design and CPO.

2. **New Resi 1 & New Resi 2 & Employment & Mixed Use.** These are going to be difficult to deliver in a timely manner until the WWTP situation has been addressed. The plan zoning in this regard needs to be realistic.
3. **Existing Residential & Town Centre.** Existing areas
4. **Public Utility, Community and Recreation, Tourism, Actives open Space, Open Space, Natural Areas, Extractive Industry.** Blessington is situated in a hugely scenic area of very high amenity but the LAP lacks any kind of vision in that regard. It has all of the following zonings but no sense of joined up thinking as each zoning is fragmented and isolated.

Blessington would massively benefit from a large multi use sports and community zoning in the town of a regional scale.

Example of such facilities are

1. Kerdiffstown, Naas, County Kildare which was constructed on an old extractive and landfill site. Blessington has significant similar opportunities.
2. Kilcullen and Athy sports and community campuses, Co Kildare. In Athy, Rugby, Soccer, GAA & Athletics are all side by side in a large complex of playing pitches and sports facilities whilst in Kilcullen their sports / community complex also includes pitch and putt, playgrounds, crèche, boxing and other community groups. Both are centred around a large multi use building purpose built to cater for multiple activities
3. Skibbereen. Skibbereen has produced some of the best rowing athletes in the County with limited water. Blessington sits on the biggest reservoir in the Country which should be a massive benefit to the town in terms of water sport and recreation and yet does not feature.

The LAP is not being proactive in any way when it comes to a joined up approach for community, sport and recreation.

The Blessington LAP should cater for a significant 20 to 30 acre development, future proofed for decades, to cater for Soccer, Rugby, Athletics, Running Track, Boxing, Playground, Water Sports such as Kayaking, Rowing, Swimming (Even if its years off, the identification of a site for a swimming pool would be great for the town)

On the Kildare County Council side, Kildare has only zoned Residential and a small area of Education zoning, where there is already planning for a school. The open space zoning is nice to have however on closer examination this is actually a flood corridor with limited or zero for potential sports and community uses.

The LAP needs to differentiate between Open Space and Space for sport, recreation and amenity use. The current open space plans, whilst extensive on the face of will give no comfort to sports groups when they are told the open space is parklands and not for sports pitches.

The right location would also be a proper trail head for the Blessington Greenway, with good facilities for walkers, bike hire and w/c facilities.

Of note is that there is a regionally established running group in Blessington called Lakeshore Striders who bring a huge benefit to the town with their events and wider regional membership. This club are actively looking for a space for their running track and athletics programme.

As a note that might be considered a little more aspirational, the LAP should also cater for road biking given that Blessington was once was part of the stage of the Tour de France and still caters for

100s of cyclists every year completing the lap of the Wicklow and Sally Gaps. Again the greenway trailhead and associated link might cater for this town custom.