



Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual
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Topic

Community Development (incl. sports facilities & schools, etc.)

Submission

Local Area Plan 2025 Re: Submission for Development of Athletics Facilities including Running Track in Blessington and Surrounding Areas Dear Members of the Local Area Plan Committee.

I am writing to advocate for the inclusion and development of dedicated athletics facilities including a running track within the Local Area Plan. These facilities would serve as a crucial resource for community games, local schools, adult athletes, and sports clubs, significantly enhancing the well-being and sporting culture of our region.

Blessington and the surrounding areas—encompassing Ballyknocken, Lacken, Hollywood, Valleymount and Ballymore Eustace—are home to a growing population eager for improved sporting infrastructure.

Currently, there are no dedicated facilities for athletics, leaving our club, particularly as we establish a junior section, without a proper home. Our club serves the largest geographical area of all 13 athletics clubs in County Wicklow, yet we lack a dedicated facility to support our growing membership. This lack of resources limits opportunities for running as well as field sports such as shot put, long jump, hurdles, and more. Despite these challenges, we have seen exceptional talent emerge from our community, and with adequate facilities, we believe we could support these athletes to reach their full potential.

Additionally, we work closely with the Sanctuary Runners, an initiative designed to integrate refugees into our community by providing them with a positive outlet to exercise, socialize, and compete. This partnership reflects our club's commitment to inclusivity and demonstrates the broader societal benefits of athletics facilities.

Furthermore, promoting athletics and sport at a young age is critical, especially in light of Ireland's high obesity rates, which are among the highest in the EU. Establishing robust sports facilities would not only nurture young athletes but also provide a positive outlet for children and families, fostering lifelong habits of health and fitness. This would have long-term benefits for both physical and mental well-being, reducing the strain on our health system.

The proposed facilities would benefit the entire community by:

- Supporting local schools in delivering comprehensive physical education.
- Offering a dedicated space for community games and sports events.

- Providing training grounds for Lakeshore Striders, Community Games and other local clubs.
- Encouraging participation in field sports and other athletics disciplines.
- Promoting social inclusion and healthy lifestyles for all age groups.

We respectfully urge the committee to prioritise this investment in community health and development. Such facilities would be an invaluable asset, ensuring that sport and fitness are accessible to all, laying the foundation for a healthier future.

Thank you for considering our submission. We would be grateful if this proposal could be brought to the forefront of the Local Area Plan discussions.

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