



DRAFT
BLESSINGTON
LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY
SCHEDULE AND IMPLEMENTATION



APPENDIX 3**Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Implementation****Table of Contents**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This appendix of the Local Area Plan (LAP) deals with the infrastructure delivery schedule and sequential development phasing programme linked with necessary investment in infrastructure for the growth settlement of 'Blessington'. The sequential development of the settlement, alongside the phased delivery of the necessary infrastructure including open space, waste, water, drainage, roads, transportation, educational facilities, recreational amenities and local services, is key to the sustainable development of the settlement. It is critical that the Local Area Plan ensures, in so far as is feasible, that development within the Local Area Plan area progresses in an ordered way which avoids 'leapfrogging' to peripheral areas that are geographically isolated from the existing settlement and infrastructural provision.

In order to ensure the successful delivery of the objectives of this plan, Wicklow County Council takes a positive proactive approach in active land management in order to expedite the delivery of new homes as part of the new residential neighbourhoods planned within the Local Area Plan. Wicklow County Council liaises with all relevant authorities in a collaborative process to resolve any potential blockages to deliver residential development in particular.

There are a number of stakeholders involved in the delivery of all the infrastructure projects. All projects are dependent on funding. There are also numerous other matters that need to fall in line in order for each infrastructure project to be delivered, like land acquisition, securing the appropriate planning approval, etc.

2. STAKEHOLDERS

There are a number of stakeholders involved in the delivery of all the infrastructure projects. The delivery of all the strategic infrastructure, water supply, wastewater treatment, transportation and schools are managed by key state agencies.

2.1 Uisce Éireann (UÉ) - Water Services

The provision of an adequate supply of water and wastewater treatment facilities are critical to facilitate and sustain the growth of the plan area. The delivery, integration and implementation of water and wastewater projects and infrastructural improvements are the responsibility of Uisce Éireann. Wicklow County Council works closely with UÉ to ensure that the County Development Plan and the LAP continue to align with both national, regional and local planning policy and that the provision of water/wastewater services will not be a limiting factor in terms of targeted growth.

Water Supply

The plan area is serviced by the Poulaphouca Reservoir Water Supply with adequate capacity currently available to accommodate the level of growth envisaged by the Core Strategy. The Poulaphouca Reservoir supplies water to the Ballymore Eustace Water Treatment Plant, which currently serves the majority of the plan area via a 1600mm trunk line feeding reservoirs in Glen Ding Forest.

Wastewater Treatment

With regards to wastewater, the majority of the plan area is served by the Blessington Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was recently upgraded. This upgraded treatment plant has a design capacity of 9,000 population equivalent and is thus operating with no capacity issues currently. There is sufficient capacity for the growth envisioned for Blessington in the core strategy as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

2.2 Roads & Transport Infrastructure stakeholders

National Transport Authority (NTA)

The NTA is the transport authority with the function of the integration of transport and land use planning, in particular public transport and traffic management needs in the eastern region of the country. Specific functions in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) are (a) undertaking strategic planning of transport; (b) investing in all public transport infrastructure and (c) developing the effective management of traffic and transport demand.

NTA Capital Investment Programme (Department of Transport funded)

Active Travel Investment

The NTA operates an Active Travel Investment Programme whereby funding is provided to local authorities, public transport bodies and other agencies for the implementation of various projects and programmes centred around the provision of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure and facilities, safety, and access to schools and public transport.

Public Transport Investment

The NTA operates a variety of public transport investment programmes which provides funding for various public transport projects. These include heavy rail, BusConnects, parking at railway stations, strategic park & ride sites, light rail, accessibility to public transport, transport technology, strategic transport planning, etc.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

TII is a state agency under the Department of Transport, working at both national and regional level, in partnership with Local Authorities regarding national roads and greenways, and with the National Transport Authority (NTA).

TII are responsible for supporting and facilitating the implementation of measures to improve the N81, M/N11, the development of the new National Cycle Network for Ireland, Greenways and providing Active Travel facilities along and across the National Roads network. TII have a key role in the delivery of the proposed Blessington eGreenway.

Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Transport Strategy 2022 -2042 (NTA)

The Blessington plan area is located within the Greater Dublin Area and the transport infrastructure was analysed by the NTA as part of the Greater Dublin Transport Strategy 2022 -2042. The Strategy sets out how transport will be developed across the GDA, including County Wicklow, up to 2042.

This strategy covers walking and cycling, rail and bus services and the road network in the GDA. It sets out a range of objectives relating to the Local Link Bus service, BusConnects, expansion of the cycle network (Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, NTA 2022), Safe Routes to School, and many other transport proposals.

Blessington Transport Assessment

A Transport Assessment accompanies the Local Area Plan. The key aims of this local transport assessment are to:

- Ensure that transport and settlement patterns mutually support each other.
- To assist plan makers to deliver land use policies and objectives to produce a settlement of such form and layout that facilitates and encourages sustainable forms of movement and transport, prioritising active travel modes of walking and cycling and use of public transport.
- Minimise the need for travel and reduce the length of journeys by maximising the proximity of people, business and the services they require;
- Promote greater investment in, and usage of, public transport modes, such as the bus network, with the support of complementary land use policies;
- Protect the capacity, efficiency and safety of national roads and associated junctions;
- Ensure that zoning strategies are consistent with value for money considerations applying to the provision of public infrastructure, including roads and public transport.

It will do this by:

- Identifying the existing transportation infrastructure, networks and services in the settlement;
- Identifying existing infrastructure and services shortfalls that are inhibiting more sustainable movements, in order to ensure that (a) all transport infrastructure and services delivery agencies have a clear programme of action and (b) development strategies set out in the LAP do not reinforce or exacerbate unsustainable transport patterns;
- Identifying future transportation infrastructure improvements that are either underway and / or committed (i.e. consent and funding in place and timeline for delivery fixed), as well as projects impacting the settlement that are not as yet commenced and / or committed but are identified in higher level plans / programmes are due to be delivered in the short, medium or long term;
- Setting out clear criteria as to how future development will be integrated with the existing or future transportation and movement networks.

2.3 Department of Education – school provision

The Department of Education is the main stakeholder with responsibility for the provision of schools by modernising / extending existing schools and providing new schools. Wicklow County Council will work closely with the Department of Education (DoEd) and individual developers to secure the co-ordinated delivery of essential school provision.

2.4 Local level stakeholders

More local level infrastructure is to be provided within the key development parcels including crèche provision, pocket parks, cycle and pedestrian routes, civic spaces and public realm improvements. In most circumstances the developer of the land is a key local level stakeholder; however there are numerous local level stakeholders many of whom are state agencies.

2.5 Wicklow County Council

Wicklow County Council (WCC) as the local authority is responsible for the plan management of the implementation of the objectives of the Local Area Plan and all the others sections of the Council – Planning, Economic and Rural Development section, Social Development section, Infrastructure and Capital Projects section, Climate, Environment, Recreation and Amenity section, Finance, Water and Information Systems section have roles in the project delivery of certain infrastructure solely or in conjunction with other bodies

Development contributions for the provision of services such as roads, footpaths and amenity / open space provision, etc will be applied where appropriate to approved planning applications. The details and basis for the determination of the contributions are set out in the Wicklow Development Contribution Scheme or any subsequent schemes adopted thereafter in accordance with the provision of section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

2.6 Kildare County Council (KCC)

Blessington is located on the boundary with Co. Kildare, with some parts of the settlement lying within Co. Kildare. The Blessington Local Area Plan does not extend past the boundary of Co. Wicklow, however it is recognised that Kildare County Council will be a key stakeholder in the delivery of infrastructure within that county that will be utilised by the population of Blessington in Co. Wicklow.

2.7 Electricity Supply Board (ESB)

The Electricity Supply Board own and operate the Poulaphouca Reservoir, which generally forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the Blessington Local Area Plan. The importance and scale of the reservoir in relation to the plan area means that the ESB will be a key stakeholder in the delivery of certain infrastructural elements. For example, much of the proposed Blessington eGreenway will traverse the lakeshore through or in the vicinity of ESB lands.

2.8 Department of Rural and Community Development

The implementation of the objectives of this Plan is often dependent on a number of funding sources. A key source of funding is available under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) operated under the Department of Rural and Community Development, which is applicable to settlements with a population of fewer than 10,000 persons which are located outside the city metropolitan areas. The types of proposals eligible for funding include strategic development areas, active land management, measures to address building vacancy and refurbishment, public realm improvements, enabling infrastructure, sustainable mobility and transition to low carbon and climate resilience.

3. ACTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT

The achievement of sustainable compact growth and regeneration will be supported through the implementation of active land management measures which promote the development of infill and brownfield lands, and strategically located greenfield sites that support the principles of consolidated growth.

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) is a key active land management tool for the delivery of houses on serviced sites in all of the towns and villages in county Wicklow. All undeveloped / vacant / idle mixed use and undeveloped residential zoned lands are annually assessed to consider whether they are in scope to be liable for the tax. Lands that are in scope are liable to pay a tax annually.

4. FUNDING SOURCES

The LAP identifies a range of strategic and local infrastructure necessary to facilitate development in the plan area. The delivery of all infrastructure is funding dependant. The key funding sources for the delivery of infrastructure are:

<u>Developer</u>	The developer of the land / infrastructure provides the funding to deliver the infrastructure or provides the infrastructure themselves.
<u>State</u>	National Development Plan, Urban Regeneration Development Funding, Rural Regeneration Development Funding, LIHAF funding, Smarter Travel funding, Uisce Eireann (UE), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), National Transport Authority (NTA), LEADER/SICAP funding, OPW, Department of Education, other government departments, etc.
<u>Wicklow County Council</u>	WCC Development contribution schemes, WCC Capital Works Programme, etc.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY SCHEDULE

This section sets out the key infrastructure necessary, in a staged delivery schedule, in order to achieve the timely delivery of the objectives of this plan. This section focuses on the key road, recreational, community and educational infrastructure. It is acknowledged that there is a broad range of infrastructure necessary in order to enhance the services to the homes, businesses and schools of Blessington.

The development and continued delivery of telecommunications and energy has not been incorporated into this schedule as it is addressed under the County Development Plan and Wicklow County Council continues to liaise and work with the necessary telecommunications and energy providers of such infrastructure to continue to enhance these services.

The lifetime of the Local Area Plan is six years. The delivery schedule is divided in to the following four phases as well as an on-going stage with delivery throughout the plan lifetime and beyond:

<u>Immediate term</u>	Year 1 and Year 2
<u>Short term</u>	Year 3 to Year 5
<u>Medium term</u>	Year 5 to Year 10
<u>Long term</u>	10 years plus
<u>On - going</u>	Throughout the plan lifetime and beyond

This schedule is a living programme. It will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess how the implementation is progressing, available resources and as new sources of funding and/or providers emerge.

Implementation & Infrastructure Delivery Schedule Table

Infrastructure	Delivery Schedule	Funding
TRANSPORT		
Implement measures identified in 'Blessington Transport Assessment'	On-going	Developer, State, WCC
Complete the Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern and southern sections)	Immediate term – Short term	Developer, State, WCC
Connect the N81 to Kilbride Road via Doran's Pit	Medium Term	Developer, State, WCC
Blessington Demesne Link Road	Medium Term	Developer, State, WCC
N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme	Long term	State
Additional Commuter/Recreational Car Parking	Medium Term	Developer, State, WCC
Improved and new bus services within and 'in and out' of the Settlement	Short term – Medium term	State
General Road Improvements	On-going	Developer, State, WCC
General Footpath Improvements	On-going	Developer, State, WCC
General Cycle Improvements	On-going	Developer, State, WCC
General Car parking Improvements	On-going	Developer, State, WCC

Infrastructure	Delivery Schedule	Funding
WATER AND WASTE WATER		
General water supply network upgrade and extension.	On-going	State (UE)
General wastewater treatment network upgrade and extension.	On-going	State (UE)
General - Replace the combined surface water system with a separate network to the waste water.	On-going	State (UE), WCC

Infrastructure	Delivery Schedule	Funding
SOCIAL		
Open Space at Blessington Demesne (Town Park)	Immediate term – Short term	Developer
Active Open Space at Blessington Demesne	Medium Term	Developer
Active Open Space at Doran’s Pit – zoned Mixed Use (MU)	Medium Term	Developer
Crèche/ Childcare facilities	Short - Medium term	Developer
Community Facility in Doran’s Pit	Medium Term	Developer
Additional Community facilities (Audit required ¹)	Short - Medium term	Developer
Graveyard Expansion	Short Term	WCC
School at Blessington Demesne (SLO1)	Medium term – Long term	State (DoEd)
School at Blessington Demesne (SLO2)	Medium term – Long term	State (DoEd)

6. PHASING

It is an objective of the Council that development is undertaken in an orderly and sustainable manner. The development of zoned land should generally be phased in accordance with the sequential approach:

- Development shall extend outwards from the centre of Blessington with undeveloped land closest to the centre and public transport routes given priority. ‘Leapfrogging’ to peripheral areas shall be strongly resisted unless absolutely necessary;
- A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of underutilised lands;

¹ See Wicklow County Development Plan Objective - *Housing development shall be managed and phased to ensure that infrastructure is adequate or is being provided to match the needs of new residents. New significant residential or mixed use development proposals (of which residential development forms a component) (Being defined as developments in excess of 50 units of housing in any settlements in Levels 1-4 in the hierarchy, 25 units in Levels 5-10, and all developments over 25 units in excess of 500m distance to a public transport service, as well as other format / sizes / locations are may be deemed necessary by the Local Authority) , shall be required to be accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Audit, to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity of existing or planned services. New significant residential or mixed use development proposals shall be required to be accompanied by a ‘Accessibility Report’ that demonstrates that new residents / occupants / employees (including children and those with special mobility needs) will be able to safely access through means other than the private car (a) local services including shops, schools, health care and recreational and sports facilities, and (b) public transport services. Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity/quality of existing or planned linkages.*

- Areas to be developed should be contiguous to existing developed areas; and
- The development of Specific Local Objectives (SLOs) should be phased in accordance with the stated objectives of the SLO where phasing has been specified.

With regard to residential development, 'edge of centre' locations will be considered the priority location for such new greenfield residential development and will generally be zoned as 'New Residential - Priority 1' (zoned RN1) while more 'out of centre' housing sites (zoned 'New Residential - Priority 2' RN2) will only be considered where Objective BLESS7 is satisfied and on the basis of integrated housing / community facilities / open space schemes that can be well connected to the existing built up area. In order to be cognisant of extant permissions and the key role that some sites will play in the delivery of essential infrastructure, it may be necessary for some 'out-of-centre' sites to remain as Priority 1.

Objective BLESS7

Notwithstanding the zoning / designation of land for new 'greenfield' residential development (RN), permission will not be considered for RN2 Priority 2 lands unless the following conditions are satisfied:

- Priority 1 new residential lands (RN1) lands have been activated (i.e. consent obtained and development initiated);
- It can be shown that the housing / population generated by the proposed development would not result in the prevailing Core Strategy targets at the time of the application being significantly breached.

7. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

Wicklow County Council is committed to taking a pro-active approach to progress the delivery of the Plan. The LAP will have effect for a period of six-years from the date of adoption, unless otherwise extended, amended or revoked, as per the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Prior to the fifth year from adoption, the Planning Department will carry out a review of the LAP to inform whether the Plan should be extended (for a maximum of another five years) or revoked. The findings of the review will be presented to the Elected Members for their consideration.

The Plan objectives are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. However, a number are set within a longer timeframe, thus they may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of the plan period. It is important to note that the implementation of a plan may be constrained by a number of elements, namely, the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding, and the availability of funding from other sources. Therefore, no funding of projects is guaranteed in advance nor is the implementation of all objectives contained within the plan.

It is intended that the various agencies, including voluntary groups, professional institutions, public and private bodies including Wicklow County Council, and other organisations in Blessington will be encouraged to participate whenever possible, in the implementation of the policies and objectives of this plan to move the settlement forward.

The Planning Section of the Council is the lead section responsible for monitoring and implementing the Plan, mainly through its development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of other directorates, including Baltinglass Municipal District.

The Plan will also be regularly reviewed in light of new legislation or guidelines, to assess progress, and to determine where amendments are required, a variation of the Plan will be necessary.