



Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual, Group
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File

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28 November 2024

Good afternoon,

Please see below points in relation to your proposed Local Area Plan (LAP) for Blessington. I have set out a number of concerns and kindly request consideration and action in relation to these points. Please keep me informed of progress in relation to this matter.

Kind regards,

Rachel Murphy

A2.8 Service Infrastructure / A.4 Overall Strategy / Infrastructure / Transport Assessment / Active Travel

- 65 is infrequent, inadequate for the current number of residents and visitors. Bus service takes longer than indicated in the plan at peak times
- An express bus service into Dublin city centre is required, at a minimum with an early morning and evening service
- The option of travelling to Sallins to get the train into Dublin is ludicrous as an alternative. It would take as long as the 65 and add further to CO₂ emissions from the additional transport
- The Bus Éireann bus to Dublin, detailed in the plan, does not take on passengers in Blessington. It only allows passengers to alight
- A Luas line needs to be extended out to Blessington. There are significant population numbers and demographic requirements who travel to Dublin for work; college; school; socialising; sports etc and to Blessington for tourism; sports; recreation; etc
- The N81 needs significant investment to become a safe road to cycle

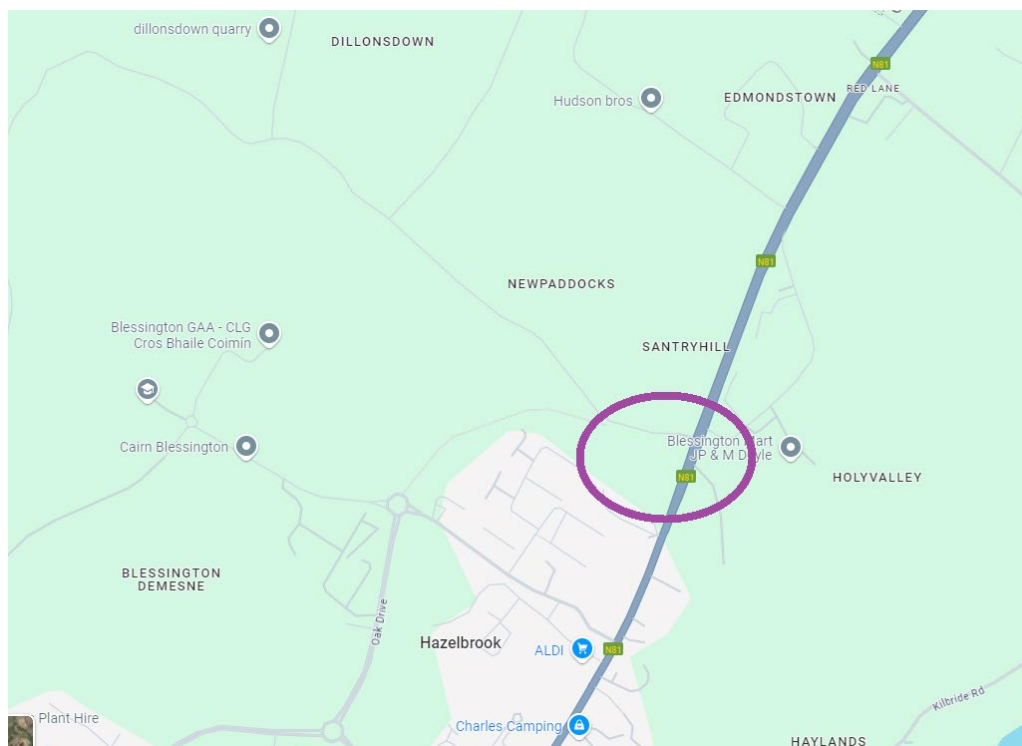
The population of Blessington cannot grow without having the infrastructure to meet the demands. No further housing estates should get planning permission before we have the transport infrastructure for additional residents. The current situation is unsustainable.

2.4.2 Condition of Existing Road Network in Blessington

I strongly contest that the N81 Blessington to Dublin road is not of adequate quality. I commute frequently on this road. The trucks from the pits outside of Blessington (particularly from the pits as circled in the image below), are destroying the roads. The trucks are covering the road markings with dirt. They are breaking the cats eyes from the road markings. The dirt can not be cleaned off the road by the road sweepers.

I drive, cycle, run and use the bus on the N81. Cycling is inherently dangerous on this road, particularly in winter. My new bike chain was recently snapped due to the amount of muck which ended up on it from the road. Each time I make it home alive on the bike, I count myself lucky. This is beyond a joke. It is a national road and the state of it is an absolute disgrace. Each time, within a few short months of it being relined, the trucks have it ruined. They must be

made to cover their loads, and made to use a truck and wheel wash before exiting the pits onto the national road.



Land Zoning – Active Open Space

Having viewed the Land Use Zoning Objectives 2025, I note that there is insufficient active open space zoned. I am co-founder of an athletics club. There are also other athletics clubs in the area and we do not have a proper athletics track to train and/or compete on. This is a huge detriment to the ever growing population of Blessington, as well as to current athletes who train here. We badly need an athletics track. I have represented Ireland in road, track and cross country races and I can not train properly, or safely for many events, in my area of residence.

As noted in your written statement, much work was done to progress a project to secure a swimming pool for Blessington. With a pop up pool located here temporarily last year. This is also badly needed in the area.

I recommend that land be rezoned for sports facilities accordingly. I suggest that the swimming pool and an athletics track be zoned together, and funding be provided to secure the progression of this much needed infrastructure for our local residents and visitors. Children in the area need more than just access to GAA pitches.

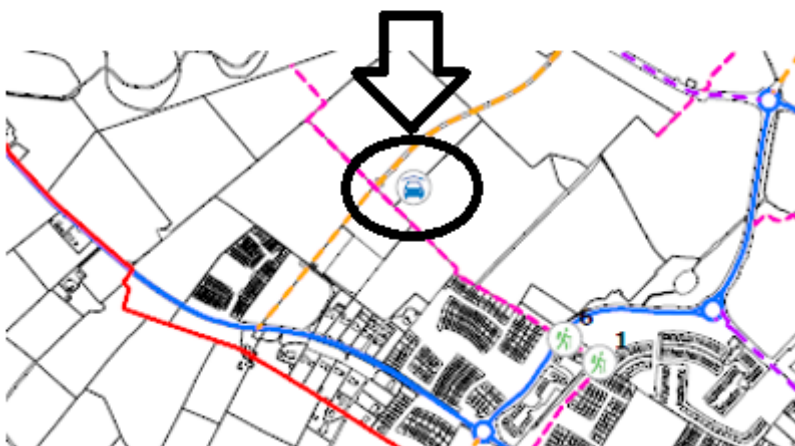
I must note that Shoreline Leisure in Greystones recently got their track resurfaced, and the Taoiseach officially re-opened the facility for them. West Wicklow has never had an athletics track. Our athletes have to travel over one hour to get to a useable track. This is a severe deterrent in developing our athletes of the future and providing a safe environment and location for individuals to train. This lack of this facility is also a deterrent for children and adults alike, from being active and healthy. Should they have this facility locally, more people would use it. They would be encouraged to get involved in sports. This would reduce the burden in the long term on the healthcare and hospital systems.

To note, this would also assist with tourism for Blessington. We have a superb location with stunning views. While abroad, I visit and use athletics tracks in the countries I travel to. This brings not only money to the track facility itself, but also the cafes, restaurants, shops and to accommodation and transport services providers, in the locality. This is a significant opportunity for Blessington. I know of no track in Ireland that has the possibility of a view onto mountains and lakes. It is something which we can all benefit from, if you zone appropriate land accordingly.

On behalf of myself, other athletes and relevant sports clubs, I request that further land be zoned accordingly as active open space, to facilitate the development of much needed sports facilities, including an athletics track facility, and swimming pool, in Blessington.

Car Parking - Specific Local Objective 2 (SLO2)

With regards to your active travel map, you have proposed to put car parking in one of the very few active open spaces proposed (map code SLO2 refers). I strongly object to this. There is insufficient active open space detailed as it stands. Using some of it for car parking, is not acceptable. Screenshot below for reference, with area indicated in black circle with arrow above for clarity.



Specific Local Objective 1 (SLO1)

Given there is a flood risk associated in the future with SLO1, I object to land in this area being zoned residential.

Specific Local Objective 4 (SLO4)

With regards to SLO4, as we have:

- insufficient infrastructure in Blessington to meet additional transport demands on our roads
- insufficient sports facilities and
- insufficient entertainment facilities
- insufficient school facilities

I object to SLO4 having a mixed use zoning. Further residential units will put too much pressure on our already breaking infrastructure. Our public transport is insufficient as it stands. We don't have recreational or leisure facilities and our roads are in a dire state. Numerous children travel outside of Blessington to attend school. This adds to further pollution and impacts our climate action mandate.

Address those matters first, before zoning any further land for residential, or mixed use purposes.

Figure B.8.5: Specific Local Objective 4 Concept Plan.

The active open space here indicates a football pitches and tennis courts. These are already available in Blessington. We need an athletics track and swimming pool. Noted that "the exact type and layout of active open space uses shall be agreed with the Planning Authority". I request that my submission be provided also to the relevant planning authority. They must be made aware of the points which I have made. I request that this LAP be revised accordingly to provide facilities for requested sports including an athletics track facility, and a swimming pool. Neither of which have not been provided for in Blessington yet.

Figure B.8.11: Specific Local Objective 8 (SLO8)

With regards to SLO8, as we have:

- insufficient infrastructure in Blessington to meet additional transport demands on our roads
- insufficient sports facilities and
- insufficient entertainment facilities
- insufficient school facilities

I object to SLO8 having a further residential zoning. Further residential units will put too much pressure on our already breaking infrastructure. Our public transport is insufficient as it stands. We don't have recreational or leisure facilities and our roads are in a dire state. Numerous children travel outside of Blessington to attend school. This adds to further pollution and impacts our climate action mandate.

Address those matters first, before zoning any further land for residential purposes.