



DRAFT
BLESSINGTON
LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK
ASSESSMENT



Blessington Local Area Plan 2025

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

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1.1 FOREWARD

This is the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan (LAP), which has been prepared and informed by *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (2009).

The purpose of the SFRA primarily is to provide an assessment of all types of flood risk to inform land-use planning decisions in the LAP. The SFRA enables the local authority to undertake the sequential approach, including the justification test, allocate appropriate sites for development and identify how flood risk can be reduced as part of the local area plan process. At each stage of the LAP process the Elected Members take into account the findings of the SFRA (and any addenda) as appropriate. The SFRA can also be used to assist other planning decisions (e.g. development management) however in any instance a site-specific flood risk assessment may be required when assessing a planning application for development.

After public display of the draft LAP and accompanying SFRA ends, the Chief Executive will prepare a report on the submissions received during the display period and will submit it to the Elected Members for their consideration. Any submissions regarding flooding will be addressed and added as an addendum to this report.

On adoption of the LAP, any SFRA Addenda which may supplement the original SFRA on the draft LAP and along with this 'Foreword' is the 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment', which accompanies the adopted Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

1.2 DISCLAIMER

Wicklow County Council makes no representations, warranties or undertakings about any of the information provided in this assessment and associated maps including, without limitations, on its accuracy, completeness, quality or fitness for any particular purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law Wicklow County Council nor any of its members, offices, associates, consultants, employees, affiliates, servants, agents or other representatives shall be liable for loss or damage arising out of, or in connection with, the use of, or the inability to use, the information provided in this assessment including but not limited to, indirect or consequential loss or damages, loss of data, income, profit, or opportunity, loss of, or damages to, property and claims of third parties, even if Wicklow County Council has been advised of the possibility of such loss or damages, or such loss or damages were reasonably foreseeable. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to change the content and / or presentation of any of the information provided in this report at their sole discretion, including these notes and disclaimer. This disclaimer, guidance notes and conditions of use shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the Republic Of Ireland. If any provision of this disclaimer, guidance notes and conditions of use shall be unlawful, void or for any reason unenforceable, that provision shall be deemed severable and shall not affect the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions.

UNCERTAINTY

Although great care and modern, widely-accepted methods have been used in the preparation of this assessment there is inevitably a range of inherent uncertainties and assumptions made during the estimation of design flows and the construction of flood models.

BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION

There has been a wide range of datasets utilised in the production of this assessment which are constantly changing and subsequently the analysis of these datasets is only correct at the time of assessment.

It is important to note that compliance with the requirements of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management- Guidelines for Planning Authorities' is a work in progress and is currently based on emerging and incomplete data as well as estimates of the locations and likelihood of flooding. As a result, this Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was based on available information at the time of assessment.

All information in relation to flood risk may be substantially altered in light of future data, new methodologies and/or analysis. As a result, all landowners and developers are advised that Wicklow County Council can accept no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of the vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding of lands in which they have an interest prior to making planning or development decisions.

In the development management process it is the responsibility of the applicant to gather relevant information sufficient to identify and assess all sources of flood risk for the development proposal. Any new data and analysis carried out after the time of assessment for this SFRA should be used in conjunction with this SFRA for development proposals.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

In accordance with the '*Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*', a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 has been undertaken.

The '*Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' were issued in 2009 by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the OPW under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The purpose of the Flood Risk Guidelines is to ensure that, where relevant, flood risk is a key consideration for Planning Authorities in preparing development plans and local area plans and in the assessment of planning applications. The Flood Risk Guidelines introduce mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Implementation of the Flood Risk Guidelines is intended to be achieved through actions at the national, regional, local authority and site-specific levels. Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála are required to have regard to the Flood Risk Guidelines in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts.

The key planning principles of the Flood Risk Guidelines are to:

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water runoff;
- Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders;
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

Clarification of advice contained in the Flood Risk Guidelines was issued in August 2014 (Circular PL2/2014) referring to two matters. The first was to ensure planning authorities are prudent in the use of the draft PFRA or CFRAM flood maps as the sole basis for deciding on planning applications, to make use of site inspections and/or knowledge of local areas, to request a site-specific flood risk assessment by an appropriately qualified engineer where appropriate and to also generally use their professional judgement in this regard.

The second matter amends the text of the guidelines to indicate that during the preparation of the development plan (or a variation of a development plan) in areas located in flood zone A and B, where the existing use zoning is classified as a "vulnerable use", the planning authority should consider if the existing use zoning of the 'vulnerable use' is still the appropriate zoning for the area. Where the planning authority considers that the existing use zoning is still appropriate, the planning authority must specify the nature and design of structural or non-structural flood risk management measures required prior to future development in such areas, in order to ensure that flood hazard and risk to the area and to other adjoining locations will not be increased, or if practicable, will be reduced. With regard to the second matter, the text amendment is noted; where the existing use zoning is in flood zone A/B and is considered a vulnerable use, where necessary a mitigation objective has been

incorporated into the local plan and/or an appropriate zoning has been applied for the existing use. Any flood risk management measures are to be considered at the development management stage.

The guidelines aim to facilitate the transparent consideration of flood risk at all levels of the planning process, ensuring a consistency of approach throughout the country. SFRAs therefore become a key evidence base in meeting these objectives.

The Guidelines work on a number of key principles, including:

- Adopting a staged and hierarchical approach to the assessment of flood risk; and
- Adopting a sequential approach to the management of flood risk, based on the frequency of flooding (identified through Flood Zones) and the vulnerability of the proposed land use.

2.2 Flood Risk Analysis Stages

The Flood Risk Guidelines recommend that a staged approach should be adopted when analysing flood risk; carrying out only such assessment stage as is needed for the purposes of decision-making. All stages of flood risk assessment may not be needed. This will depend on the level of risk and the potential conflict with proposed development and the scale of mitigation measures being proposed. The Flood Risk Guidelines state that both Stage 1 'Flood Risk Identification' and Stage 2 'Initial Flood Risk Assessment' are required to be undertaken in strategic flood risk assessment for a City or Town within a county plan. On the basis that Blessington is a settlement within the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, and that the Blessington Local Area Plan will be consistent with that County plan, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shall proceed to Stage 1 and Stage 2.

A Staged Approach to Flood Risk Assessment

Stage 1 Flood Risk Identification

To identify whether there may be any flooding or surface water management issues related to either the area of regional planning guidelines, Development Plans and Local Area Plans or a proposed development site that may warrant further investigation at the appropriate lower level plan or planning application level. To suggest measures to be integrated into the CDP/LAP that will contribute towards both flood risk management in the county and compliance with the Flood Risk Guidelines.

Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment

To confirm sources of flooding that may affect a plan area or proposed development site, to appraise the adequacy of existing information and to scope the extent of the risk of flooding which may involve preparing indicative flood zone maps. Where hydraulic models exist, the potential impact of a development on flooding elsewhere and of the scope of possible mitigation measures can be assessed. In addition, the requirements of the detailed assessment should be scoped.

Stage 3 Detailed Flood Risk Assessment

To assess flood risk issues in sufficient detail and to provide a quantitative appraisal of potential flood risk to a proposed or existing development or land to be zoned, of its potential impact on flood risk elsewhere and of the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures.

Source: DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines

2.3 Definition of Flood Zones

In the *'Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities'*, 'Flood Zones' are used to indicate the likelihood of a flood occurring. These zones indicate a high, moderate or low risk of flooding from fluvial or coastal sources and are defined as follows:

Flood Zone A – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding);

Flood Zone B – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 years and 1% or 1 in 100 years for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 years and 0.5% or 1 in 200 years for coastal flooding);

Flood Zone C – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 years for both river and coastal flooding). Flood Zone C covers all areas of the plan which are not in zones A and B; hence it is not highlighted on the FRA maps.

The flood zones described above are indicative of river and coastal flooding only. They should not be used to suggest that any areas are free from flood risk, since they do not include the effects of other forms of flooding such as from groundwater or artificial drainage systems.

The indicative Flood Zone map for the plan area is provided in Section 6 of this report.

2.4 Sources of Information

The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 underwent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and was adopted on the 12th September 2022. The Council Executive was assisted by JBA Consulting Ltd in the preparation of that SFRA. As part of that process, countywide flood zone mapping was developed based on a collation of various data sources. In preparing the flood risk zones, a precautionary approach was applied, where necessary, to reflect uncertainties in flooding datasets and risk assessment techniques.

This countywide mapping will be utilised as flood mapping for the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

Section 2.1 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment outlines the sources of information available at the time of assessment. These sources of information included the following (refer to Section 2.1 of the CDP SFRA for full details):

- Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM)
- Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP)
- National Coastal Protection Strategy Study – flood and coastal erosion risk maps
- National Indicative Fluvial Mapping
- Previous Strategic Flood Risk Assessments
- OPW Historic Flood Points and Extents
- OPW Benefiting land maps
- Alluvial deposit maps
- Historic 'Six Inch' maps
- Historic 'Six Inch' maps with flood feature applied
- Expert advice from OPW
- In house studies
- RSES and associated Regional Flood Risk Appraisal
- Consultation with the relevant municipal area engineer in WCC
- An examination of contours of the land
- Aerial photography
- Information on flood defence condition and performance
- River Basin Management Plans and reports
- Local libraries and newspaper reports
- Interviews with local people, local history/natural history societies etc.
- Walkover survey to assess potential sources of flooding, likely routes for flood waters and the site's key features, including flood defences, and their condition
- River Dargle Flood Defence Scheme (Bray) [not relevant to Blessington]
- River Avoca (Arklow Town) Flood Relief Scheme [not relevant to Blessington]
- The Murrough Coastal Protection Study

2.5 Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Flood Risk Appraisal

The EMRA Regional Flood Risk Appraisal identified the broad nature of flooding that may affect the primary growth settlements set out in the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy, i.e. the Dublin Metropolitan Area, Regional Growth Centres, and Key Towns. Moderate growth settlements were not included in the assessment. On this basis, Blessington was not assessed in the Regional Flood Risk Appraisal.

2.6 Flood Risk Management Plan for the Liffey River Basin and Dublin Bay

In 2018, the Office of Public Works published a Flood Risk Management Plan for the Liffey River Basin and Dublin Bay. Blessington was included in this plan as an Area for Further Assessment (AFA).

Alongside a recommendation of various general measures, Section 7.4 of the Liffey River Basin and Dublin Bay FRMP sets out proposed measures for each area identified as an AFA. Measures included for the Blessington AFA, which is largely consistent with the area of the Blessington Local Area Plan 2025, are described as follows:

'Description of the Proposed Measure:

Potentially viable flood relief works for Blessington that may be implemented after project level assessment and planning or Exhibition and confirmation might include physical works, such as a series of hard defences (flood embankments and walls) and, on the Newtown Park watercourse, the sealing of four manholes. The hard defences would protect to the 1% AEP fluvial flood event, with an average and maximum height of 1.2m and 2.4m respectively and a total length of 1.5km. A 125m length of road would also have to be raised. The potentially viable flood relief works, which at this stage of assessment are deemed to be preferred, are set out in Appendix G, noting that these will be subject to project-level assessment and possible amendment.'

The measures underwent multi-criteria analysis and climate change adaptability analysis, with implementation details given as follows:

Conclusion	
Measure Name:	Progress the development of a Flood Relief Scheme for Blessington AFA
Code:	IE09-IE-AFA-090074-0109-M61
Measure:	Progress the project-level development and assessment of a Flood Relief Scheme for Blessington AFA, including environmental assessment as necessary and further public consultation, for refinement and preparation for planning / Exhibition and, if and as appropriate, implementation.
Implementation:	OPW and/or Wicklow CoCo - To be confirmed
Funding:	OPW

Figure 2.1: Proposed measures for a flood relief scheme in Blessington.

Source: Liffey River Basin and Dublin Bay Flood Risk Management Plan 2018.

In terms of prioritisation, the proposed measure falls into Stream 2 'Medium and Small Schemes: Measures costing in between €750k/€1m and €15m'. It is stated that measures in this stream will be prioritised on a regional basis, by reference to the six CFRAM study areas. The OPW's list of flood relief schemes, available on floodinfo.ie, lists the Blessington Flood Relief Scheme as a future scheme with no status currently assigned to it. The body responsible for the implementation of this scheme has yet to be confirmed.

2.7 The Sequential Approach and Justification Test

Each stage of the SFRA process aims to adopt a sequential approach to the management of flood risk in the planning process. The sequential approach to flood risk management is set out in Figure 1 (Source Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' DoEHLG/OPW 2009,). In summary, the key principles of the sequential approach include:

1. Avoid flood risk, where possible;
2. Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
3. Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

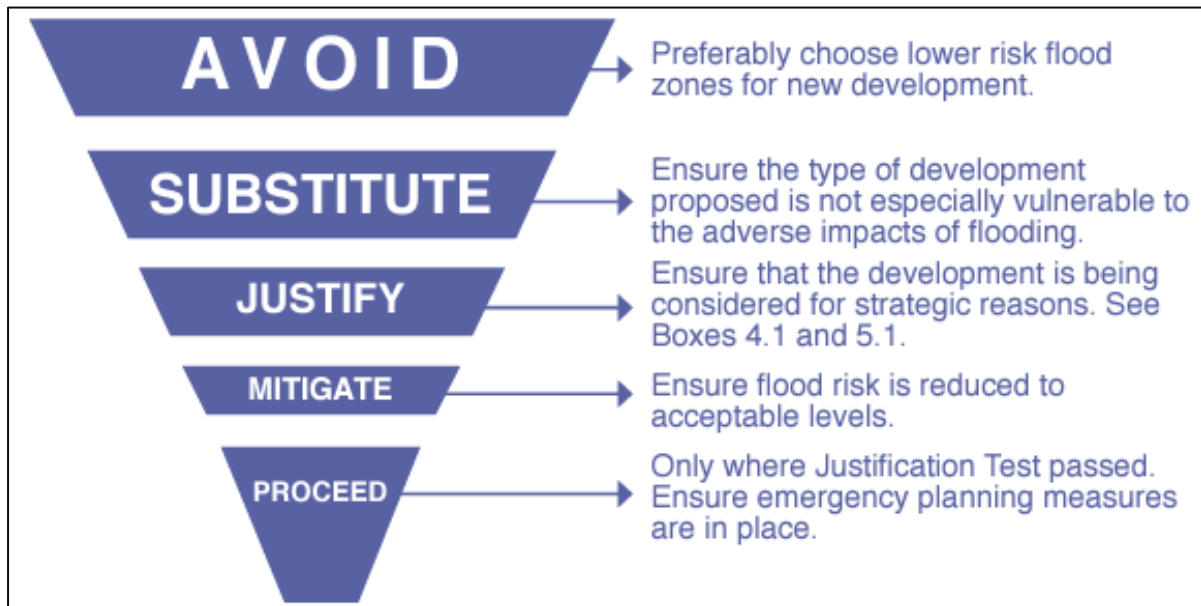


Figure 2.2: The sequential approach to the management of flood risk.

Source: DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines

In other words, where possible, development in areas identified as being at flood risk should be avoided; this may necessitate de-zoning lands within the plan area. If de-zoning is not possible, then re-zoning from a higher vulnerability land use, such as residential, to a less vulnerable use, such as open space, may be required. Where rezoning is not possible, exceptions to the development restrictions are provided for through the '**Justification Test**'. The plan-making Justification Test is used at the plan preparation and adoption stage where a planning authority needs to consider the future development of areas at a high or moderate risk of flooding, for uses or development vulnerable to flooding that would generally be inappropriate. In such cases, the planning authority must be satisfied that it can clearly demonstrate on a solid evidence base that the zoning or designation for development will satisfy the Justification Test. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below illustrates those types of development that would be appropriate to each flood zone and those that would be required to meet the Justification Test. Section 2.2 sets out the Justification Test for plan making. Where the planning authority considers that land should be zoned for 'inappropriate development' that does not meet the criteria of the Justification Test, the flooding risk should be mitigated, so that the flood risk is reduced to an acceptable level by means of land use strategies or by means of detailed proposals for the management of flood risk, as addressed in a Flood Risk Assessment.

Development Types			
	Flood Zone A	Flood Zone B	Flood Zone C
Highly vulnerable development (including essential infrastructure)	Justification Test	Justification Test	Appropriate
Less vulnerable development	Justification Test	Appropriate	Appropriate
Water compatible development	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate

Source: DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines

Table 1.1: Matrix of vulnerability versus flood zones to illustrate both appropriate development and development that is required to meet the justification test.

Classification of Vulnerability of Different Types of Development	
Vulnerability Class	Land uses and types of development which include*:
Highly vulnerable development (including essential infrastructure)	Garda, ambulance and fire stations and command centres required to be operational during flooding; Hospitals; Emergency access and egress points; Schools; Dwelling houses, student halls of residence and hostels; Residential institutions such as residential care homes, children's homes and social services homes; Caravans and mobile home parks; Dwelling houses designed, constructed or adapted for the elderly or other people with impaired mobility; and Essential infrastructure, such as primary transport and utilities distribution, including electricity generating power stations and sub-stations, water and sewage treatment, and potential significant sources of pollution (SEVESO sites, IPPC sites, etc.) in the event of flooding.
Less vulnerable development	Buildings used for: retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial and non-residential institutions; Land and buildings used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping, subject to specific warning and evacuation plans; Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry; Waste treatment (except landfill and hazardous waste); Mineral working and processing; and Local transport infrastructure.
Water compatible development	Flood control infrastructure; Docks, marinas and wharves; Navigation facilities; Ship building, repairing and dismantling, dockside fish processing and refrigeration and compatible activities requiring a waterside location; Water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation); Lifeguard and coastguard stations; Amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms; Essential ancillary sleeping or residential accommodation for staff required by uses in this category (subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan).

Source: DoEHLG The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines

*Uses not listed here should be considered on their own merits.

Table 1.2: Classification of the vulnerability of different types of development.

3. STAGE 1 FLOOD RISK IDENTIFICATION

3.1 Risk Identification

'Identification' is the process for deciding whether a plan or project requires a flood risk assessment and is essentially a desk-based exercise based on existing information. In order to establish whether a flood risk issue exists or may exist in the future, a range of sources have been consulted.

3.2 Indicators of Flood Risk

The county-wide flood mapping developed during the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 indicates areas of flood risk within the Blessington area. On this basis, it is determined that assessment should immediately proceed to Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

4. STAGE 2 INITIAL FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Flood Risk Assessment

Following the guidelines, this flood risk assessment shows the zoning objectives of the plan and their typical permitted uses. In accordance with the guidelines, an assessment was undertaken to determine the appropriateness of land uses (allowed by virtue of land use zoning) to each flood zone. The assessment is undertaken in accordance with Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the guidelines (included as tables 1.2 and 1.1 above) and compares the vulnerability to flooding of different types of development with a specific site's location in any flood zone. Where the zone is deemed to be appropriate no further action is required in the FRA. Where the zone requires the Justification Test to be carried out, it is done so, with any necessary mitigation measures recommended.

The draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 includes the following land use zonings:

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
RE: Existing Residential	To protect, provide and improve residential amenities of existing residential areas	To provide for house improvements, alterations and extensions and appropriate infill residential development in accordance with principles of good design and protection of existing residential amenity. In existing residential areas, the areas of open space permitted, designated or dedicated solely to the use of the residents will normally be zoned 'RE' as they form an intrinsic part of the overall residential development; however new housing or other non-community related uses will not normally be permitted.
RN1: New residential Priority 1	To provide for new residential development and supporting facilities during the lifetime of the plan.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential developments at appropriate densities with excellent layout and design, well linked to the town centre and community facilities. To provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.
RN2: New residential Priority 2	To provide for new residential development and supporting facilities where it can be demonstrated that such development would accord with the Core Strategy housing target for that settlement after the activation of Priority 1 lands.	To facilitate for the provision of high quality new residential developments at appropriate densities with excellent layout and design, well linked to the town centre and community facilities. To provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.
TC: Town Centre	To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including residential, retail, commercial, office and civic use.	To develop and consolidate the existing town centre to improve its vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure and residential uses, while delivering a quality urban environment, with emphasise on regeneration,

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
		infill town and historic centre conservation; ensuring priority for public transport where applicable, pedestrians and cyclists, while minimising the impact of private car based traffic and enhance and develop the existing centre's fabric.
E: Employment	To provide for the development of enterprise and employment	To facilitate the further development and improvement of existing employment areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality employment and enterprise developments in a good quality physical environment.
CE: Community & Education	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities	To facilitate the development of necessary community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure.
AOS: Active Open Space	To protect and enhance existing and provide for new active open space	Subject to the protection and enhancement of natural biodiversity, to facilitate the further development and improvement of existing active open spaces, formal exercise areas, sports grounds, playing pitches, courts and other games areas and to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality active recreational areas.
OS1: Open Space	To protect and enhance existing and provide for recreational open space	Subject to the protection and enhancement of natural biodiversity, to facilitate the further development and improvement of existing parks and casual play areas, to facilitate opportunities for the development of new high quality amenity open areas and to restrict developments / activities (such as the use or development of such lands for formal sports grounds for organisations that are not available for a broad range of the public) that would reduce the opportunities for use by the wider public.
OS2: Natural Areas	To protect and enhance existing open, undeveloped lands	To protect, enhance and manage existing open, undeveloped lands that comprise flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, steep banks, green breaks between built up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity.
PU: Public Utility	To maintain lands providing services infrastructure	To allow for lands to be designated for public utilities such as waste water treatment plants, large ESB sub-stations, gasworks etc
T: Tourism	To provide for tourism related development	To provide for the sustainable development of tourism related structures, uses and infrastructure. To provide for the development of tourism facilities including accommodation of an excellent sustainable design and aesthetic quality. Tourism related office, civic and cultural and commercial development will be facilitated.

ZONING	OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
MU: Mixed Use	To provide for mixed use development	The nature of the mixed use development envisaged for any particular site is set out in the text of the plan.
AG: Agriculture	To provide for the sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and essential rural development.	Subject to the protection and enhancement of natural biodiversity, the rural landscape, and built and cultural heritage, to facilitate the further development and improvement of agriculture, forestry and essential rural development including rural-related enterprise and amenity / utility related infrastructure.
EX: Extractive Industry	To provide for extraction / quarrying and associated activities including processing of extracted materials and land restoration.	To facilitate the development of extraction/ quarrying, associated activities and land restoration.

The box below gives typical appropriate uses for each zone type:

Uses generally appropriate for **residential (RN / RE)** zoned areas include houses, apartments, residential open space, education, community facilities, retirement homes, nursing homes, childcare, health centres, guest house, bed and breakfast, places of public worship, home based economic activity, utility installations and ancillary development and other residential uses in accordance with the County Development Plan (CDP) and Local Area Plan (LAP).

Uses generally appropriate for **town centre (TC)** include residential development, commercial, education retail, retail services, health, restaurants, public house, public buildings, hotels, guest houses, nursing / care homes, parking, office, tourism and recreational uses, community, including provision for religious use, utility installations and ancillary developments for town centre uses in accordance with the CDP and LAP.

Uses generally appropriate for **employment (E)** zoned land include general and light industry, office uses, enterprise units, education, appropriate warehousing, petrol filling stations (as deemed appropriate), public transport depots, open space, including sports grounds, community facilities including community and sports centres, utility installations and ancillary developments for employment and industry uses in accordance with the CDP and LAP.

Uses generally appropriate for **community and educational (CE)** zoned land include community, educational and institutional uses include burial grounds, places of worship, schools, training facilities, community hall, nursing homes, health related developments, sports and recreational facilities, utility installations and ancillary developments for community, educational and institutional uses in accordance with the CDP and LAP.

Uses appropriate for **active open space (AOS)** zoned land are sport and active recreational uses including infrastructure and buildings associated with same. Schools are appropriate.

Uses appropriate for **open space (OS1)** zoned land are recreational uses such as formal / informal landscaped parks with off-road walking / cycling paths, as well as playgrounds, skate parks, Mixed Use Games Areas, outdoor gyms, and allotments.

Uses appropriate for **natural areas (OS2)** zoned land are uses that protect and enhance the function of these areas as flood plains, buffer zones along watercourses and rivers, green breaks between built

up areas, green corridors and areas of natural biodiversity. The development of these lands for recreational uses may only be considered where such use is shown to not undermine the purpose of this zoning.

Uses generally appropriate for **public utility (PU)** zoned land are for the provision of necessary infrastructure and services such as roads / footpaths / cycleways, car parks, train station, water and waste water treatment plants, large ESB sub-stations, gasworks.

Uses generally appropriate for **tourism (T)** zoned land are tourism accommodation and tourism / recreational uses such as Bed & Breakfast, cultural uses, holiday homes, hotels, recreational facilities.

Uses generally appropriate for any **mixed use (MU)** area will be specified in the plan.

Uses generally appropriate for **agriculture (AG)** zoned land are agricultural uses (and associated buildings) including crop cultivation, horticulture, animal husbandry, forestry, residential (subject to policies in relation to housing in the open countryside as set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan), farm shops, agri-business and agri-tourism where required to be in a rural location, equestrian uses, kennels, allotments, sustainable energy installations and utility structures, amenity walks and greenways.

Uses generally appropriate for **extractive industry (EX)** zoned land are extractive industry uses (the winning of all minerals and substances in or under land of a kind ordinarily worked by underground or open cast mining), including value added production, such as concrete, asphalt and block production, and ancillary developments in accordance with the County Development Plan.

4.2 Flood Risk Zones and the Application of the Sequential Approach/Justification Test for Blessington

The following is an analysis of the vulnerability of land uses on sites that fall within Flood Zones A and B, and where appropriate, the application of the Justification Test for plan making. The full extent of flood zones A & B within Blessington is shown on Map No. 4 'Indicative Flood Zones' of the draft Local Area Plan.

In the assessment to follow, flood risk zones are shown thus:

 **Flood Zone A**

 **Flood Zone B**

Proposed Land Use Zones are as follows:

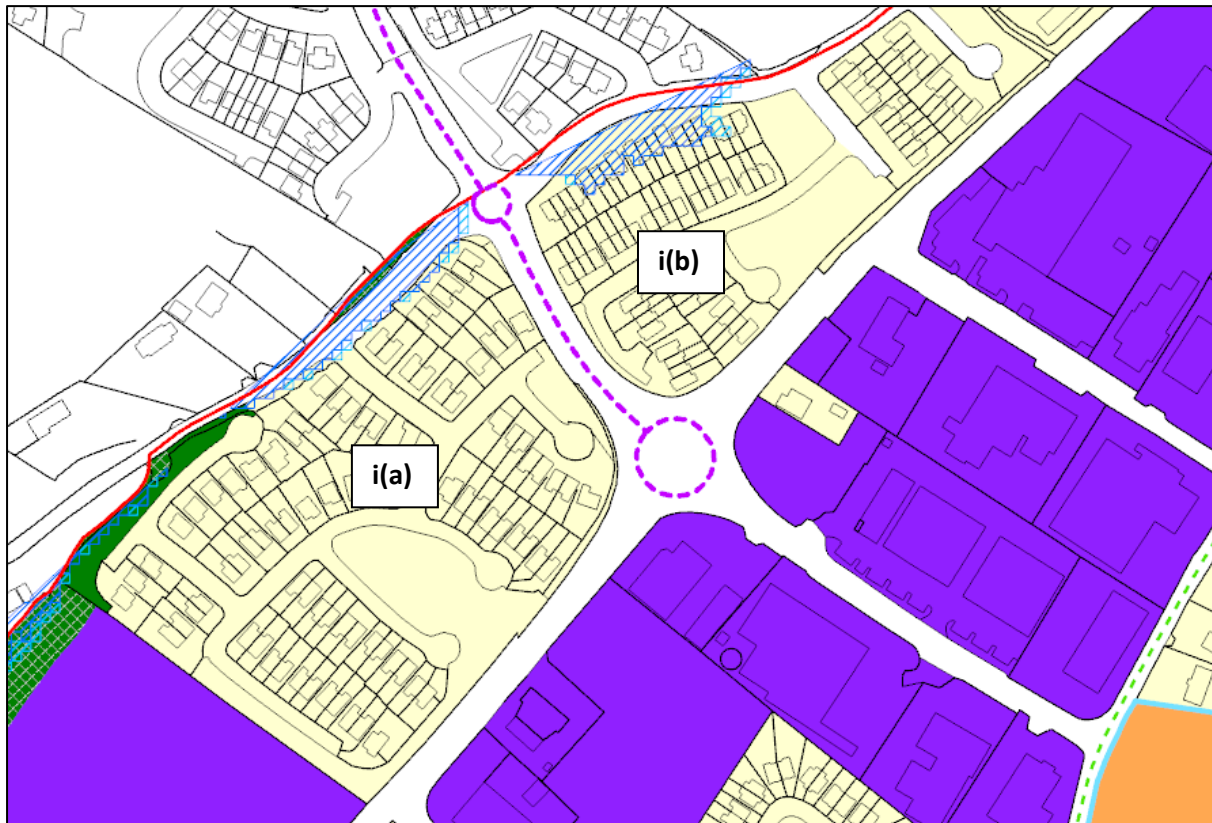
LEGEND

-  **Blessington Settlement Boundary**
-  **Specific Local Objectives**
-  **Road Objectives**
-  **AG - Agriculture**
-  **RN1 - New Residential - Priority 1**
-  **RN2 - New Residential - Priority 2**
-  **RE - Existing Residential**
-  **TC - Town Centre**
-  **MU - Mixed Use**
-  **PU - Public Utility**
-  **CE - Community & Education**
-  **T - Tourism**
-  **AOS - Active Open Space**
-  **OS1 - Open Space**
-  **OS2 - Natural Areas**
-  **E - Employment**
-  **EX - Extractive Industry**
-  **Blessington Greenway**
-  **Preferred Route Alignment N81**
-  **Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme**

LAND USE ZONING: Existing Residential (RE)

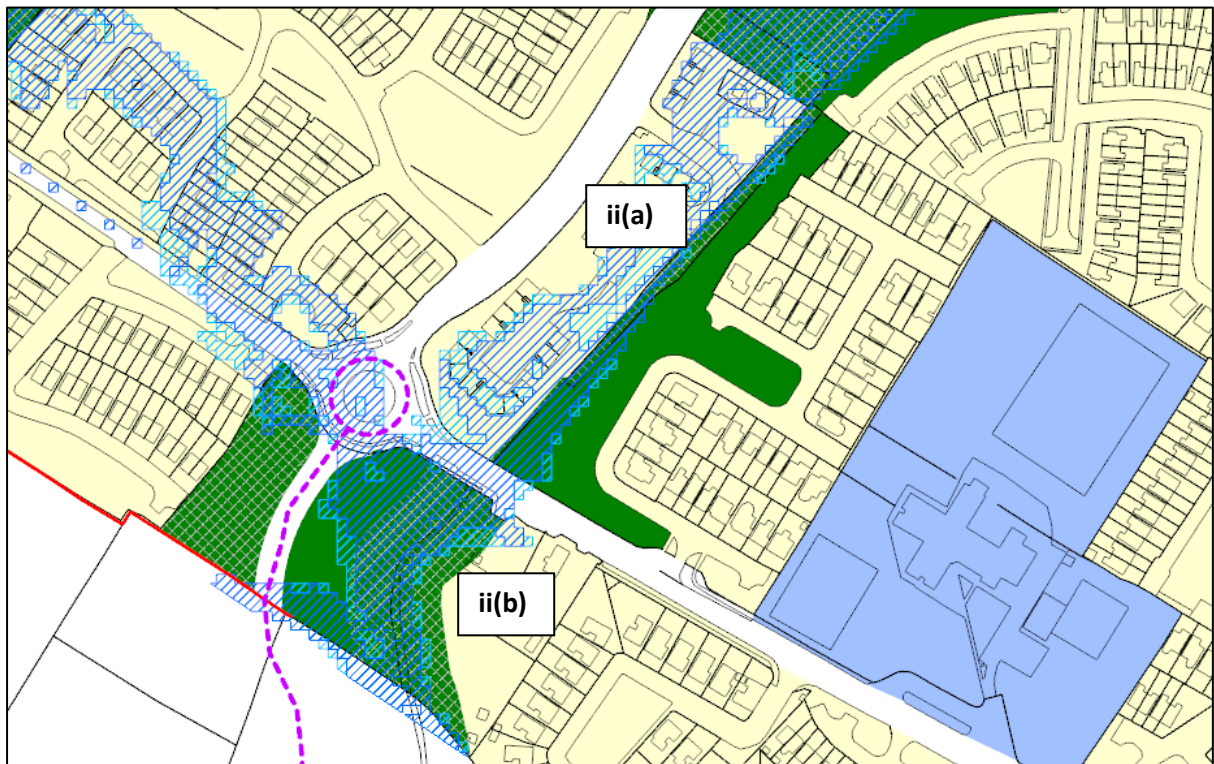
It has been determined that there are 4 No. locations within the plan area that are proposed to be zoned 'RE – Existing Residential' which are located within Flood Zones A or B.

(i) Blessington Abbey & Blessington Orchard



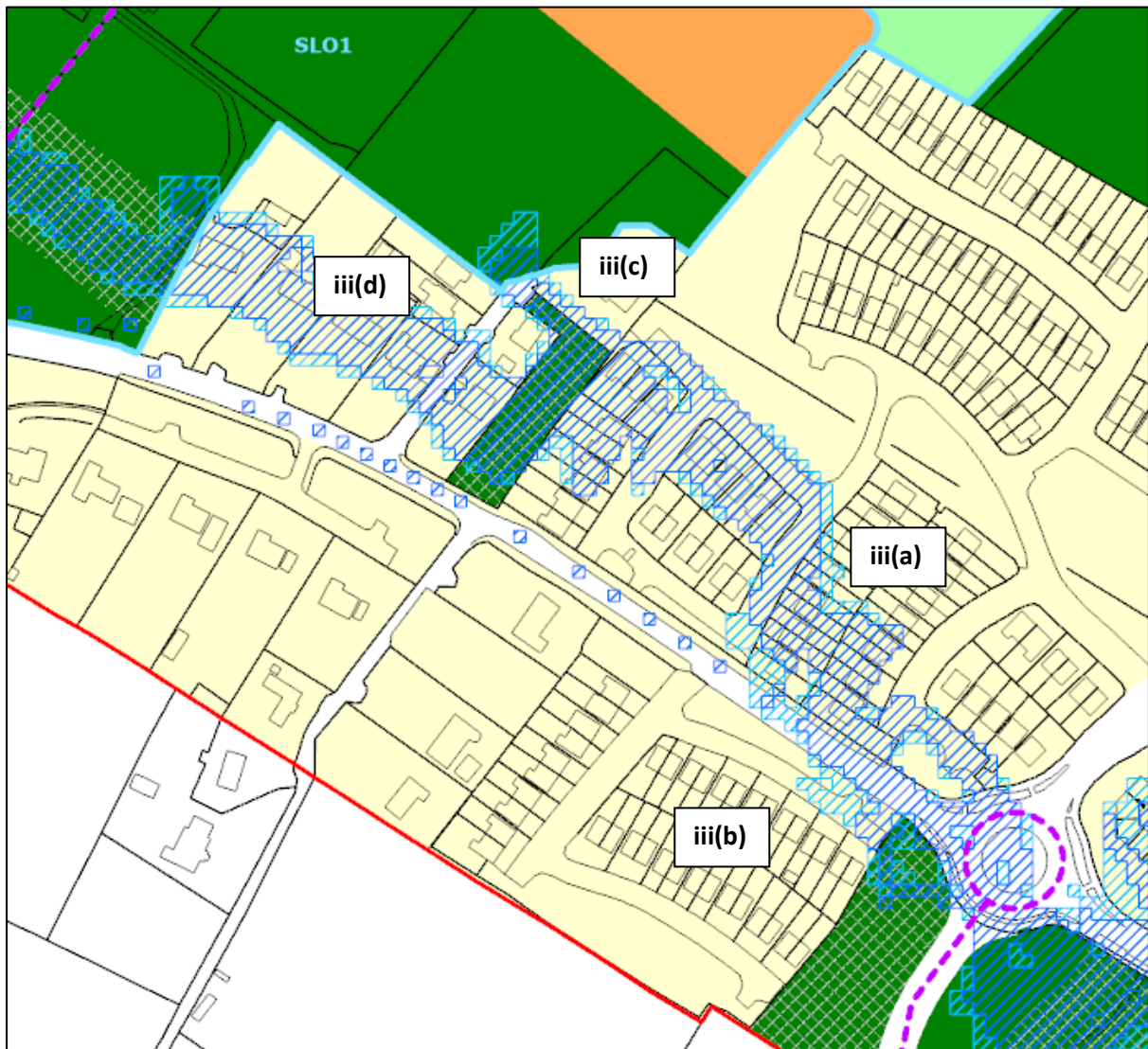
Land Use Zoning	Existing Residential (RE)
Flood Zone	All sites: A & B.
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	All sites: Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	All sites: Yes

(ii) Deerpark Court & Naas Road.



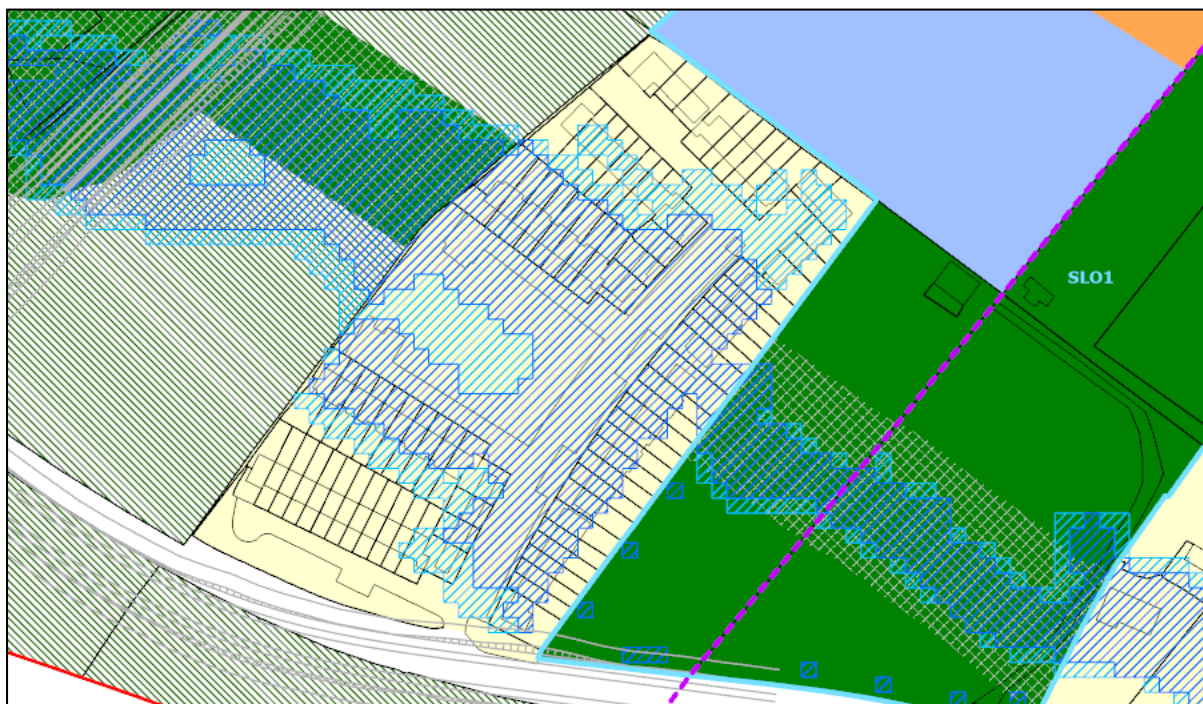
Land Use Zoning	Existing Residential (RE)
Flood Zone	All sites: A & B.
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	All sites: Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	All sites: Yes

(iii) Deerpark, Haywood & Naas Road.



Land Use Zoning	Existing Residential (RE)
Flood Zone	All sites: A & B.
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	All sites: Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	All sites: Yes

(iv) Glen Ding Estate



Land Use Zoning	Existing Residential (RE)
Flood Zone	A & B.
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Yes

Plan-Making Justification Test									
1	<p>The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.</p> <p>The Settlement Strategy of The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates Blessington as a 'Level 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and identifies this settlement typology as being identified for a growth rate of c. 25-30%. The Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a population target of 6,145 persons by Q2 2028, from a 2016 population of 5,234 persons. The Core Strategy further indicates a total housing growth target of 519 units from 2016 to 2031.</p>								
2	<p>The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;</td> <td>All sites: No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;</td> <td>All sites: Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;</td> <td>All sites: No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and</td> <td>All sites: No</td> </tr> </table>	(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;	All sites: No	(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;	All sites: Yes	(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;	All sites: No	(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and	All sites: No
(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;	All sites: No								
(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;	All sites: Yes								
(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;	All sites: No								
(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and	All sites: No								

	(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	N/A – these lands are developed
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3	A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.	Assessment of flood risk has been incorporated into the Plan SEA Process
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Conclusion

All sites requiring a justification test: Justification test failed

Recommendation

These lands are currently developed for a permitted housing development. As such, it is considered appropriate to retain the RE zoning objective (No dwellings are permitted within the Flood zones). Applications for minor development (e.g. extensions) are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues. Should expansion of existing uses be proposed, flood mitigation measures are required (see Section Mitigation Objectives below).

LAND USE ZONING: New Residential – Priority 1 (RN1)

There are no areas zoned New Residential – Priority 1 (RN1) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	RN1
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: New Residential – Priority 2 (RN2)

There are no areas zoned New Residential – Priority 2 (RN2) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	RN2
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Town Centre (TC)

There are no areas zoned Town Centre (TC) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	TC
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Employment (E)

There are no areas zoned Employment (E) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	E
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Community & Education (CE)

There are no areas zoned Community & Education (CE) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	CE
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Active Open Space (AOS)

There are no areas zoned Active Open Space (AOS) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	AOS
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Open Space (OS1)

As uses permitted under an Open Space 'OS1' land use zoning are water compatible, all such areas located within flood zones A or B are zoned appropriately.

Land Use Zoning	Open Space (OS)
Flood Zone	A, B & C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Natural Areas (OS2)

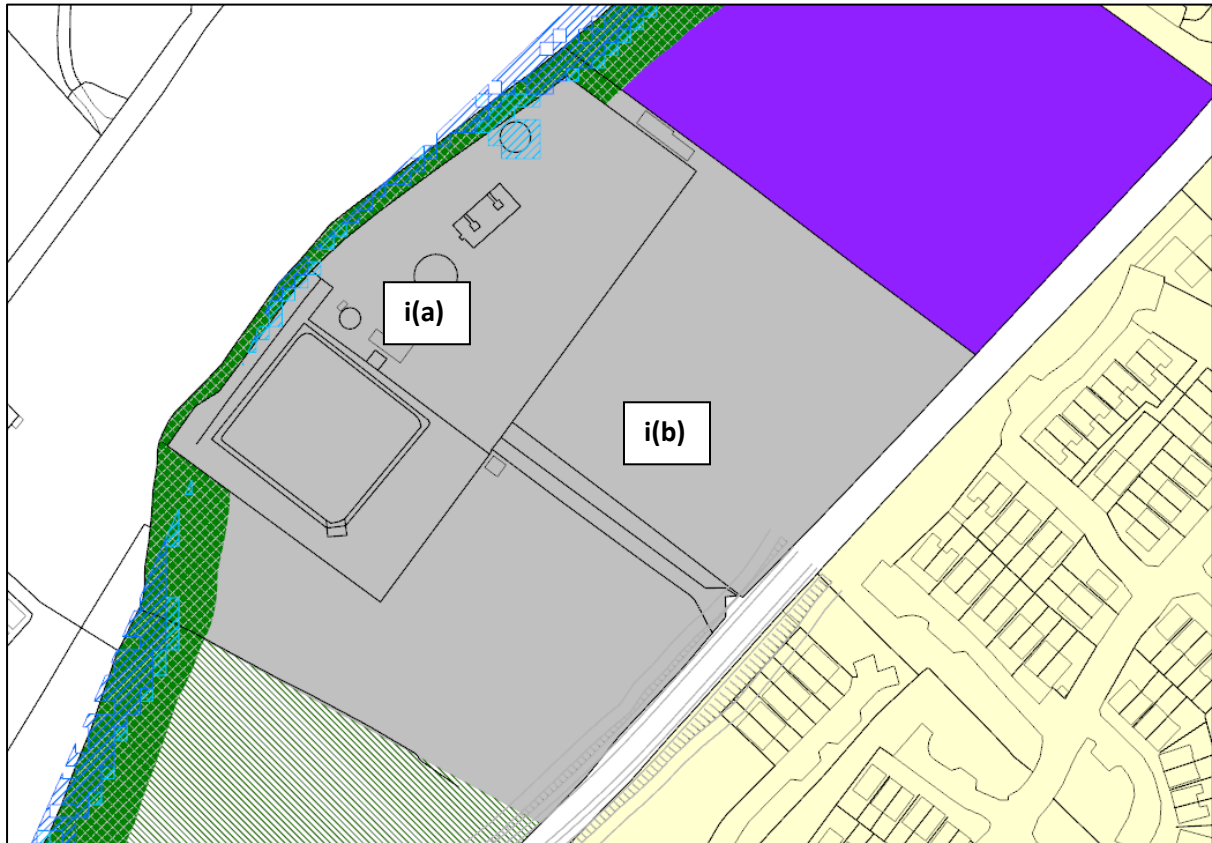
As uses permitted under a Passive Open Space 'OS2' land use zoning are water compatible, all such areas located within flood zones A or B are zoned appropriately.

Land Use Zoning	Natural Areas (OS2)
Flood Zone	A, B & C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Public Utilities (PU)

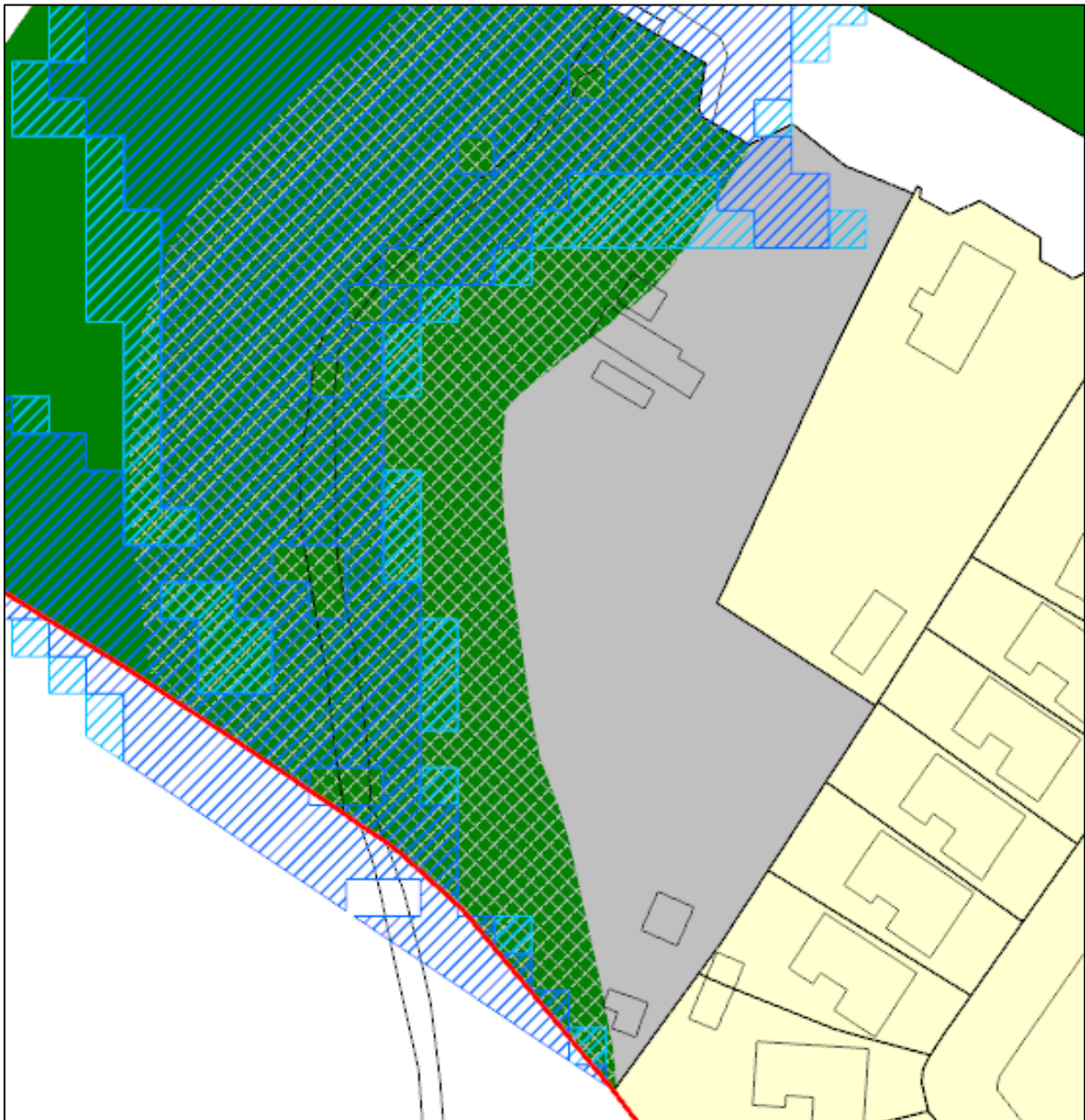
It has been determined that there are 2 No. locations within the plan area that are proposed to be zoned 'PU – Public Utilities' which are located within Flood Zones A or B.

(i) Blessington Waste Water Treatment Plant & Adjacent Lands



Land Use Zoning	Public Utilities (PU)
Flood Zone	Site i(a): A & B Site i(b): C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Site i(a): Land use zoning not appropriate Site i(b): Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Site i(a): Yes Site i(b): No

(ii) WCC Depot Naas Road



Land Use Zoning	Public Utilities (PU)
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Yes

Plan-Making Justification Test

1	The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.	The Settlement Strategy of The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates Blessington as a 'Level 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and identifies this settlement typology as being identified for a growth rate of c. 25-30%. The Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a population target of 6,145 persons by Q2 2028, from a 2016 population of 5,234 persons. The Core Strategy further indicates a total housing growth target of 519 units from 2016 to 2031.
2	<p>The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:</p> <p>(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;</p> <p>(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;</p> <p>(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;</p> <p>(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and</p> <p>(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or</p>	<p>Site i(a): Yes - Waste Water Treatment Plants/Pumping Stations serve all parts of established or designated urban settlements, including the core.</p> <p>Site ii: Yes - Operations from Local Authority depots serve all parts of established or designated urban settlement, including the core</p> <p>Site i(a): Yes. Site ii: Yes</p> <p>Site i(a): N/A - Waste Water Treatment Plants/Pumping Stations serve all parts of established or designated urban settlements, including the core. Site ii: N/A Local Authority depots serve all parts of established or designated urban settlements, including the core.</p> <p>Site i(a): Yes Site ii: Yes</p> <p>N/A - these lands</p>

	development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	are developed
3	A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.	Assessment of flood risk has been incorporated into the Plan SEA process.

Conclusion

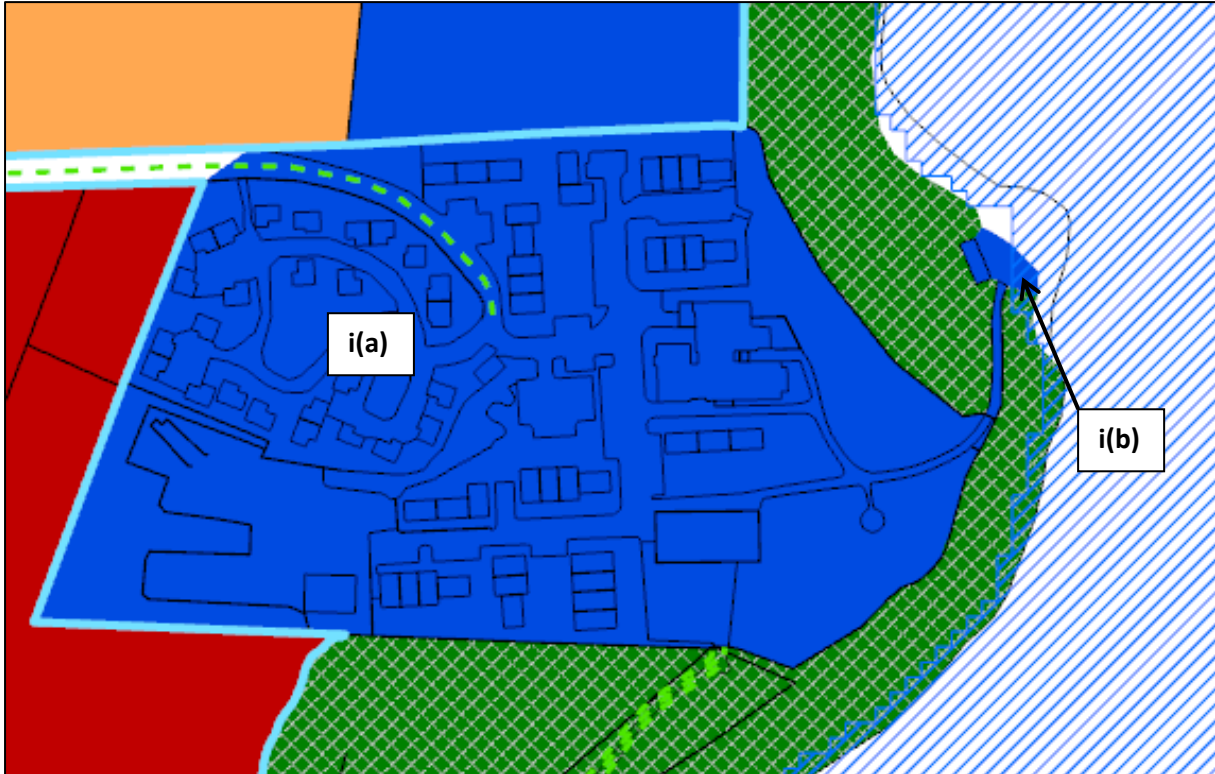
All sites: Justification test satisfied.

Recommendation

All sites: No further action required.

LAND USE ZONING: Tourism (T)

It has been determined that there is 1 No. location within the plan area that is proposed to be zoned Tourism (T) which are located within Flood Zones A or B.



Land Use Zoning	Tourism (T)
Flood Zone	Site i(a): C Site i(b): A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Site i(a): Land use zoning is appropriate Site i(b): Land use zoning not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Site i(a): No Site i(b): Yes

Plan-Making Justification Test	
1	The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
	The Settlement Strategy of The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates Blessington as a 'Level 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and identifies this settlement typology as being identified for a growth rate of c. 25-30%. The Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a population target of 6,145 persons by Q2 2028, from a 2016 population of 5,234 persons. The Core Strategy further indicates a total housing growth target of 519 units from 2016 to 2031.
2	The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in

particular:	
(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;	Site i(b): No
(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;	Site i(b): Yes.
(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;	Site i(b): No
(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and	Site i(b): No
(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	N/A – these lands are developed

3 A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.	Assessment of flood risk has been incorporated into the Plan SEA process.
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Conclusion

Sites i(b): Justification test failed.

Recommendation

Site i(b): These lands are currently developed for tourism uses, which primarily consists of a lakeshore area for the launching of pleasure craft. As such, it is considered appropriate to retain the T zoning objective. Applications for minor development are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues. Should expansion of existing uses be proposed, flood mitigation measures are required (see Section Mitigation Objectives below).

LAND USE ZONING: Mixed Use (MU)

There are no areas zoned Mixed Use (MU) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	MU
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Agriculture (AG)

There are no areas zoned Agriculture (AG) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	AG
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE ZONING: Extractive Industry (EX)

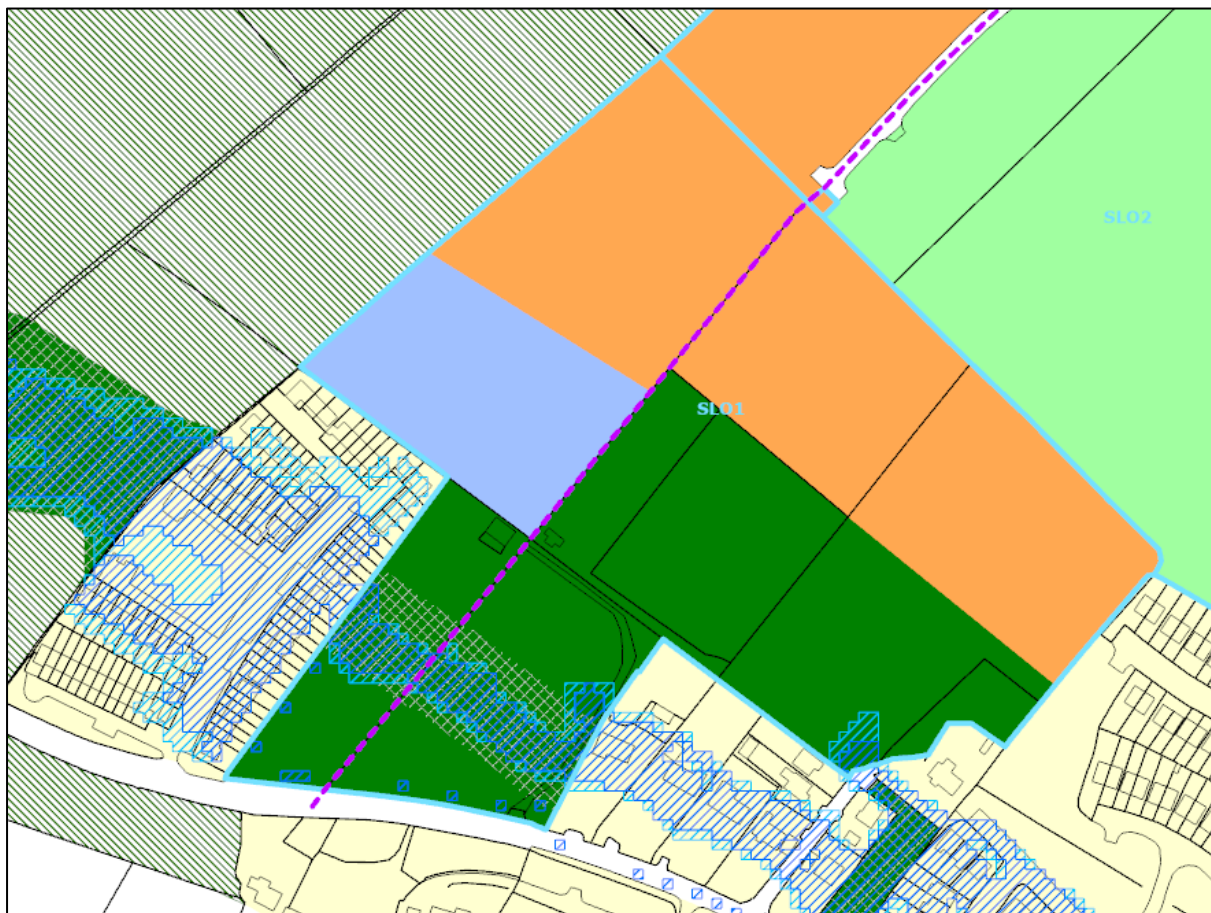
There are no areas zoned Extractive Industry (EX) that are located within Flood Zones A or B.

Land Use Zoning	EX
Flood Zone	All sites: C
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use zoning is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE OBJECTIVE: Specific Local Objectives (SLO)

It has been determined that there is 3 No. locations within the plan area that are proposed to be 'Specific Local Objectives' which are located within Flood Zones A or B. The requirements of the relevant SLO that would be delivered within a flood zone are highlighted in bold.

(i) SLO1 – Lands at Naas Road



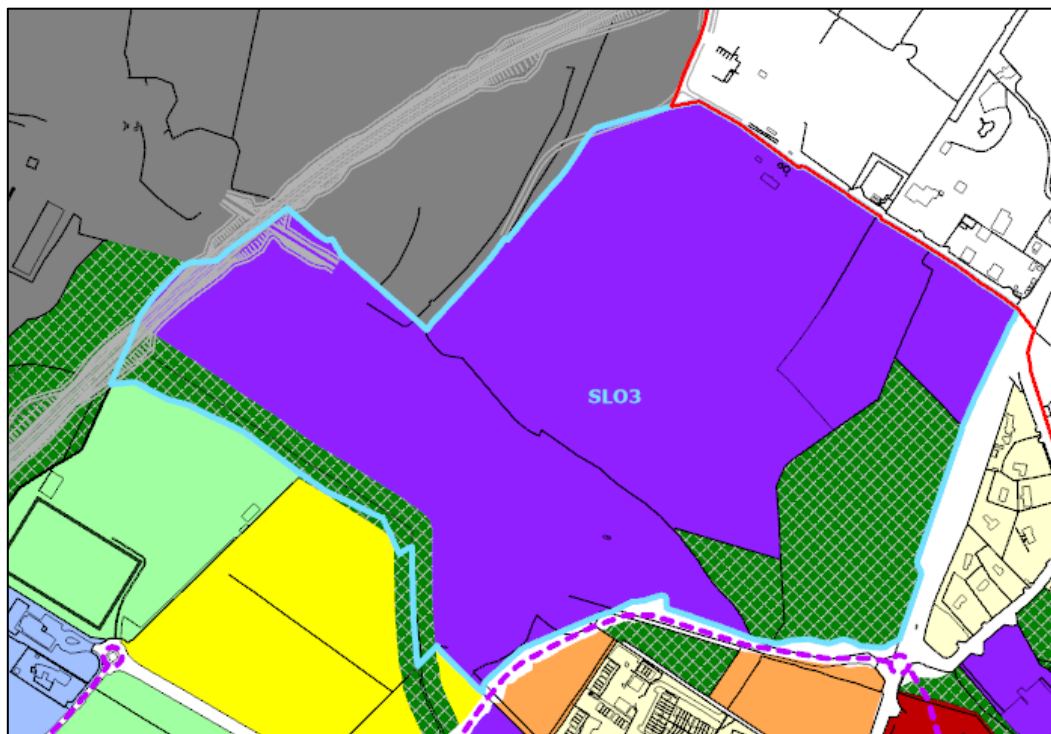
This SLO is located in the townland of Blessington Demesne. This SLO measures c.10 ha and comprises **c3.9 ha zoned OS1 'Open Space'**, **c.0.7 ha zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'**, c.1.3 ha zoned CE 'Community and Education', and c4.1 ha zoned RN2 'New Residential Priority 2'. In the previous Blessington Local Area Plan 2013, lands within this SLO were zoned for Active Open Space uses. However, future scenario flood mapping undertaken under the CFRAM programme indicates significant areas of potential flood risk in this area. While Active Open Space may be permissible under the current flood zones set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan, other locations within the settlement not subject to flood risk are preferable for such uses. Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- **The restoration of the culverted watercourses within the SLO to open watercourses with associated riparian zones corresponding to lands zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'. This must not increase flood risk in adjacent areas, e.g. Glen Ding estate.**

- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value.
- The delivery of the road objective linking the Naas Road to the Blessington GAA grounds, as located within SLO1. The design of this road objective should aim to minimise the loss of trees and existing hedgerows. The road objective may only cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. The development of structures along this road objective should provide a strong sense of enclosure as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, subject to the adequate protection of visual/landscape amenity from Blessington Main Street/Blessington Inner Relief Road to Glen Ding Forest. Residential development will not be permitted without the delivery of this road in full
- CE zoned lands measuring not less than 1.3 ha shall be serviced as part of the development of the SLO and reserved for future education use.
- The reservation of land for a bus stop along the Naas Road (to serve bus services to/from Naas/Sallins).
- **The reservation of land for allotments (both individual plots and an area of ‘community garden’) on lands zoned OS1 ‘Open Space’. The quantum of allotment space shall be agreed with the Planning Authority. Any remaining OS1 lands shall be laid out as a public park. An appropriate buffer shall be provided between allotments and existing housing along the Naas Road, with pedestrian/cyclist only access into the laneway serving Finner House to the south east of the SLO. Permission for residential development in this SLO will not be considered unless this OS1 / allotment area has been laid out and is available for use upon the occupation of the 1st house.**
- Development within the SLO should aim to maximise pedestrian/cyclist permeability between the allotments and the (under construction) green link to Glending Wood that passes along the northern boundary of the SLO, and provide strong passive surveillance to both of these elements.

Land Use Objective	Specific Local Objective (SLO) – SLO1
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

(ii) SLO3 – Quarry Employment Lands



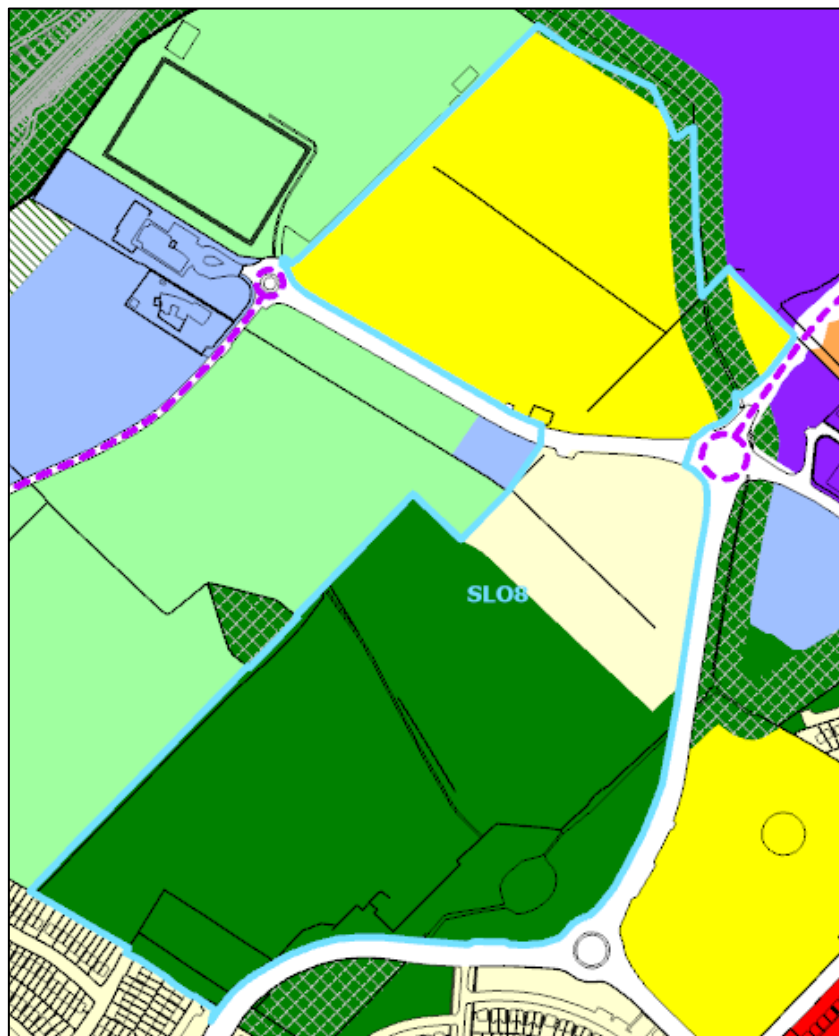
This SLO is located in the townlands of Santryhill, Newpaddocks, Dillonsdown, and Blessington Demesne. The SLO measures c.51.5 ha and comprises c.41.9 ha zoned E 'Employment' and c.9.6 ha zoned OS2 'Natural Areas' zonings. Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

- The development of an integrated (not piecemeal) scheme for employment use on former quarry lands. The development of infrastructure (e.g. full extent of road network, services, park and landscape elements) to allow for the later disposal of employment plots will be considered in this regard.
- The making safe of former quarrying areas and the laying out of an open public amenity nature park through the SLO along the boundary of **OS2 lands along the Deerpark Stream**, linking to areas of existing woodland zoned OS2 on the eastern boundary of the SLO. This park should be capable of facilitating pedestrian and cycle access to Glen Ding Forest from the N81 and the Blessington Inner Relief Road. An active travel link should also be provided through the SLO northwards towards Crosscoolharbour/Crosschapel (refer to Map 6 Active Travel)
- The development of employment units within this area shall be designed and finished in a manner capable of fully integrating into the surroundings of the amenity lands, whilst also providing passive supervision of surrounding walks and cycle routes. Where structures are proposed along the boundary of the Blessington Inner Relief Road or N81, they should provide a strong sense of enclosure as per Section 4.2.1 of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.
- Filtered permeability measures should aim to direct the majority of vehicular traffic (including HGVs) away from the built up area of Blessington, with an appropriate entrance onto the N81 to the northeast of the SLO. The proposed entrance into this area proposed as part of the northern section of the Blessington Inner Relief Road may be used for local vehicular traffic accessing the park area or a car park for the overall scheme but should minimise the use of this entrance for direct access to employment units by HGVs.

- The development of appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures which shall have regard to the setting and curtilage of structures and sites of heritage value, and habitats of biodiversity value including Local Biodiversity Areas. A management plan for the phased regeneration of plantation woodland into native woodland within the SLO shall be included as part of any planning application.
- Development should have regard to the proposed N81 Tallaght to Hollywood Cross Road Improvement Scheme.

Land Use Objective	Specific Local Objective (SLO) – SLO3
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

(iii) SLO8 – Blessington Demesne (East)



This SLO is located in the townland of Blessington Demesne. This SLO measures c. 29 ha and comprises c. 3.1 ha zoned RE 'Existing Residential', c. 9.1 ha zoned RN1 'New Residential – Priority 1', c.15.3 ha zoned OS 'Open Space', and c. 1 ha zoned OS2 'Natural Areas'. Any development proposal shall comply with the County Development Plan, this Local Area Plan and the following:

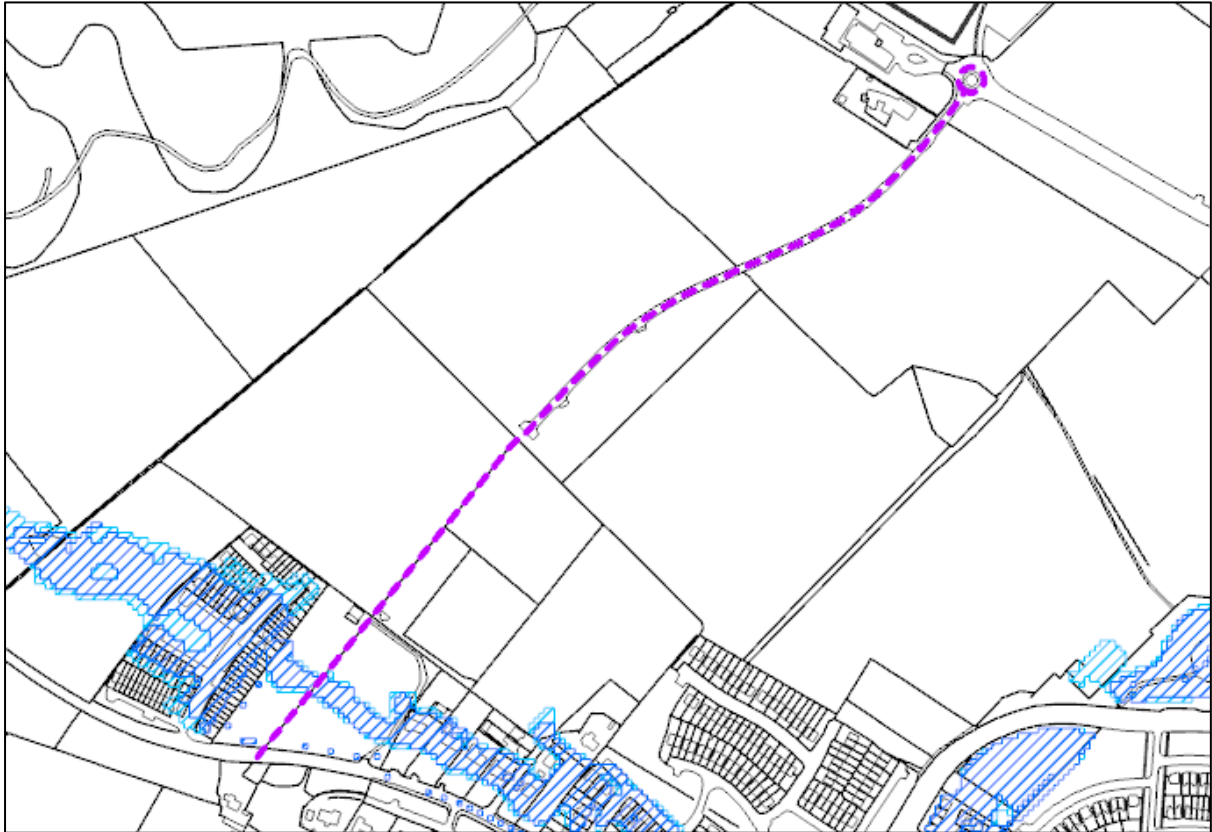
- **The development of a new town park on lands zoned OS1 ‘Open Space’. This town park should include a range of walkways, open areas, seating, and landscaping. This park should also include a bowling green, tennis courts, and a playing field (these elements are currently under construction). The development of the town park should have regard to and integrate demesne features and other heritage elements associated with the former Blessington Demesne, and should include appropriate buffer zones/mitigating measures in relation to habitats of biodiversity value (including areas identified as Local Biodiversity Areas).**
- Permission for additional residential development within this SLO will not be considered unless this town park will be completed and available for use, in full, upon the occupation of the 1st house.
- The following pedestrian/cyclist links:
 - from Blessington Inner Relief Road along the southern boundary of the SLO towards Glen Ding Forest (under construction), refer to Map 6 Active Travel.
 - **from the town park northwards towards the SLO boundary, joining with links within SLO3, refer to Map 6 Active Travel. This link should cross watercourses in line with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028. Elements of this link are under construction.**
 - along the boundary of OS2 lands around the Deerpark watercourse, as relevant, as per objective BLESS48.

Land Use Objective	Specific Local Objective (SLO) – SLO8
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective is appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	No

LAND USE OBJECTIVE: Road Objectives (RO)

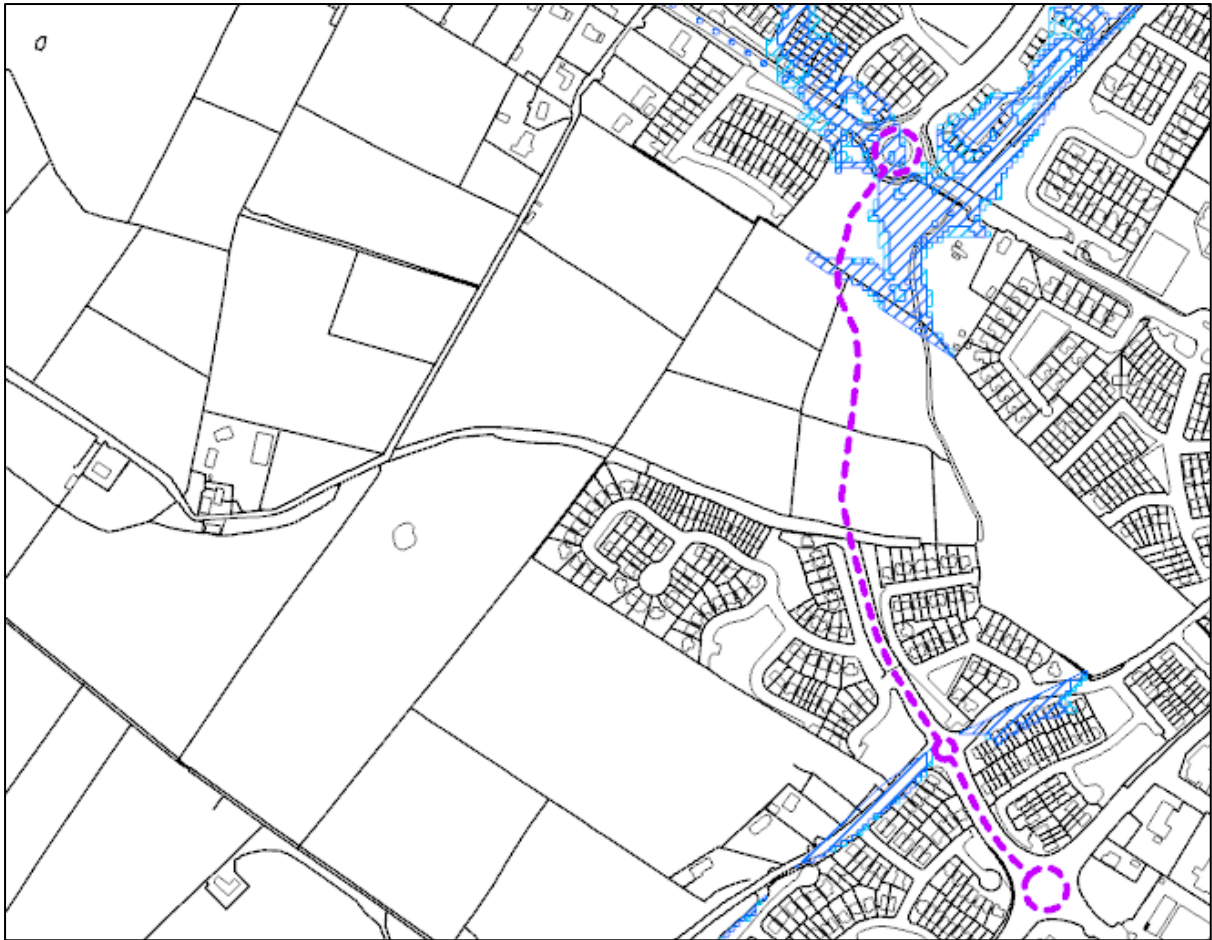
It has been determined that there are 3 No. locations within the plan area that are proposed to be 'Road Objectives' which are located within Flood Zones A or B.

(i) Blessington Demesne Link Road



Land Use Objective	Road Objective (RO)
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Yes

(ii) Blessington Inner Relief Road (southern section)



Land Use Objective	Road Objective (RO)
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Yes

(iii) Blessington Inner Relief Road (northern section)



Land Use Objective	Road Objective (RO)
Flood Zone	A & B
Vulnerability of Land Use vs. Flood zone	Land use objective not appropriate
Requirement for Justification Test	Yes

Plan-Making Justification Test											
1	<p>The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.</p> <p>The Settlement Strategy of The Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 designates Blessington as a 'Level 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Town' and identifies this settlement typology as being identified for a growth rate of c. 25-30%. The Core Strategy of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out a population target of 6,145 persons by Q2 2028, from a 2016 population of 5,234 persons. The Core Strategy further indicates a total housing growth target of 519 units from 2016 to 2031.</p>										
2	<p>The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;</td> <td>Sites (ii) & (iii): The Blessington Inner Relief Road is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of Blessington. Site (i): No.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;</td> <td>All sites: No.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;</td> <td>All sites: No.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and</td> <td>All sites: No.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.</td> <td>All sites: Yes, as the road links in question would all require passing over flood zones regardless of the exact route in question.</td> </tr> </table>	(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;	Sites (ii) & (iii): The Blessington Inner Relief Road is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of Blessington. Site (i): No.	(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;	All sites: No.	(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;	All sites: No.	(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and	All sites: No.	(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	All sites: Yes, as the road links in question would all require passing over flood zones regardless of the exact route in question.
(i) Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement;	Sites (ii) & (iii): The Blessington Inner Relief Road is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of Blessington. Site (i): No.										
(ii) Comprises significant previously developed and/or under-utilised lands;	All sites: No.										
(iii) Is within or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement;	All sites: No.										
(iv) Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth; and	All sites: No.										
(v) There are no suitable alternative lands for the particular use or development type, in areas at lower risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	All sites: Yes, as the road links in question would all require passing over flood zones regardless of the exact route in question.										
3	<p>A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse</p> <p>Assessment of flood risk has been incorporated into the Plan SEA process.</p>										

impacts elsewhere.

Conclusion

All sites: Justification test failed

Recommendation

In relation to Sites (ii) and (iii), it is considered appropriate to maintain the road objective. There is no other possible route for the Blessington Inner Relief Road that does not pass through flood zones, as the middle section of the road and the southern start point have already been constructed, restricting potential routes to those indicated. The roundabout and watercourse crossing marking the start of the northern section has also already been constructed. On the basis of the above, it is deemed appropriate to maintain the road objective on the site. The Flood risk objectives of the County Development Plan shall apply to any development application.

In relation to Site (i), it is considered appropriate to maintain the road objective. The road link proposed would require passing over areas of flood risk (streams) regardless of exact location and layout. Such a road link would have to be consistent with CPO 17.26 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, which would require riparian buffers and clear-span bridges over watercourses rather than culverting, i.e. less development within the area at risk of flooding. In the design of this road link, the flood risk objectives of the County Development Plan shall apply (see Section Mitigation Objectives below).

4.3 Mitigation Objectives

All development proposals within the Blessington Local Area Plan area will be subject to the full range of objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (or any update thereof). The following mitigation objectives are included in Chapter 14 'Flood Risk Management' of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028:

CPO 14.01 To support the implementation of recommendations in the OPW Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.

CPO14.02 To support and facilitate flood management activities, projects or programmes as may arise, including but not limited to those relating to the management of upstream catchments and the use of 'natural water retention' measures¹, **and** ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.

CPO14.03 To recognise the concept of coastal evolution and fluvial flooding as part of our dynamic physical environment, and adopt an adaptive approach to working with these natural processes. The focus of a flood management strategy should not solely be driven by conservation of existing lands; it should recognise that marshes, mud flats and other associated eco-systems evolve and degenerate, and appropriate consideration should be given to the realignment of defences and use of managed retreat and sacrificial flood protection lands to maintain such habitats as part of an overall strategy.

CPO 14.04 To ensure the County's natural coastal defences (beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands) are protected and to ensure that their flood defence/management function is not put at risk by inappropriate works or development.

CPO14.05 To continue to work with the OPW and other agencies to deliver Flood Defence Schemes in the County as identified in current and future FRMPs, and in particular:

- Avoca River (Arklow) Flood Defence Scheme;
- Avoca River (Avoca) Flood Defence Scheme;
- Low cost works in accordance with the OPW's Minor Works Scheme;
- Coastal Protection Projects, where funding allows;

and ensure that development proposals support, and do not impede or prevent, progression of such schemes.

¹ Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) are multi-functional measures that aim to protect water resources and address water-related challenges by restoring or maintaining ecosystems as well as natural features and characteristics of water bodies using natural means and processes

CPO 14.06 To implement the 'Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009).

CPO 14.07 To prepare new or update existing flood risk assessments and flood zone maps for all zoned lands within the County as part of the review process for Local Area Plans, zoning variations and Small Town Plans, where considered necessary.

CPO 14.08 The zoning of land that has been identified as being at a high or moderate probability of flooding (flood zones A or B) shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and in particular the 'Justification Test for Development Plans' (as set out in Section 4.23 and Box 4.1 of the Guidelines).

CPO 14.09 Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments **in an area at risk of flooding** shall comply with the following:

- Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines;
- An appropriately detailed flood risk / drainage impact assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at risk of flooding and the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding;
- Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to that which are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines unless the 'plan making justification test' has been applied and passed;
- Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'Plan Making Justification Test' development will only be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines.
- Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA.

Where flood zone mapping **does not indicate a risk of flooding** but the Planning Authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'Plan Making Justification Test' will not be satisfied.

CPO 14.10 To prohibit development in river flood plains or other areas known to provide natural attenuation for floodwaters except where the development can clearly be justified with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 'Justification Test'.

CPO 14.11 To limit or break up large areas of hard surfacing in new developments and to require all surface car parks to integrate permeability measures such as permeable paving.

- CPO 14.12** Excessive hard surfacing shall not be permitted for new, or extensions to, residential or commercial developments and all applications will be required to show that sustainable drainage techniques have been employed in the design of the development.
- CPO 14.13** Ensure the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the Wicklow County Council SuDS Policy to ensure surface water runoff is managed for maximum benefit. In particular to require proposed developments to meet the design criteria of each of the four pillars of SuDS design; Water Quality, Water Quantity, Amenity and Biodiversity.
- CPO 14.14** Underground tanks and storage systems shall be permitted as a last resort only where it can be demonstrated the other more sustainable SuDS infrastructure measures are not feasible. In any case underground tanks and storage systems shall not be permitted under public open space, unless there is no other feasible alternative.
- CPO 14.15** To promote the use of green infrastructure, such as swales and wetlands, where feasible as landscape features in new development to provide storm / surface runoff storage and reduce pollutants, as well as habitat, recreation and aesthetic functions.
- CPO 14.16** For developments adjacent to all watercourses or where it is necessary to maintain the ecological or environmental quality of the watercourse, any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse in accordance with the guidelines in 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

5. FLOOD RISK & CLIMATE CHANGE

'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) make reference to the potential effects of climate change on flood risk and flood risk management.

In consultation with the Office of Public Works, future scenario flood mapping has been reviewed in relation to the area of the Blessington LAP area. A precautionary approach to future estimates has been taken in that, where multiple future scenarios are available (e.g. mid-range, high-end, etc.), the highest-end/worst case scenarios have been reviewed.

The following flood mapping has been reviewed:

CFRAM River Flood Extents High-End Future Scenario:

The High-End Future Scenario extents were generated taking in the potential effects of climate change using an increase in rainfall of 30% and sea level rise of 1,000 mm (40 inches).

CFRAM Coastal Flood Extents High-End Future Scenario:

The High-End Future Scenario extents were generated taking in the potential effects of climate change using an increase in rainfall of 30% and sea level rise of 1,000 mm (40 inches).

National Coastal Flood Hazard Mapping 'High++' End Future Scenario:

The High++ End Future Scenario (H++EFS) maps represent a projected future scenario for the end of century (circa 2100) and include allowances for projected future changes in sea levels and glacial isostatic adjustment (GIA). The maps include an increase of 2000mm in sea levels above the current scenario estimations. An allowance of -0.5mm/year for GIA was included for the southern part of the national coastline only (Dublin to Galway and south of this).

Having reviewed the above future scenario flood mapping, the following can be stated:

- The increase in fluvial flood extent generally affects the already developed areas within the area of the Blessington LAP. As such, it is not appropriate to change the zoning of these lands from their existing permitted uses.
- Where green field land is affected by future scenario flood mapping, the sites are generally large enough such that the development of desired uses may avoid development in the at risk area utilising the sequential approach in site planning. In some cases, zonings have been changed to more appropriate uses.

On this basis, the written statement of the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 includes the following objective (see text in bold):

Applications for new developments or significant alterations/extension to existing developments in an area at risk of flooding shall comply with the following:

- Follow the 'sequential approach' as set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines;
- An appropriately detailed flood risk / drainage impact assessment will be required with all planning applications, to ensure that the development itself is not at risk of flooding and the

development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment (both up and down stream of the application site), taking into account all sources of flooding;

- Restrict the types of development permitted in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B to that which are 'appropriate' to each flood zone, as set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines unless the 'plan making justification test' has been applied and passed;
- Where a site has been subject to and satisfied the 'Plan Making Justification Test' development will only be permitted where a proposal complies with the 'Justification Test for Development Management', as set out in Box 5.1 of the Guidelines.
- Flood Risk Assessments shall be in accordance with the requirements set out in the Guidelines and the SFRA.

Where flood zone mapping does not indicate a risk of flooding but the Planning Authority is of the opinion that flood risk may arise or new information has come to light that may alter the flood designation of the land, **including the latest future scenario flood mapping**, an appropriate flood risk assessment will be required to be submitted by an applicant for planning permission and the sequential approach shall be applied as the 'Plan Making Justification Test' will not be satisfied.

6. FLOOD MAPPING

See attached Map No. 4 'Flood Risk' indicating flood zones A & B as relevant to the Draft Blessington Local Area Plan 2025.

Map No. 4 'Flood Risk' also indicates the area in which there may be a risk of flooding in the future when accounting for the effects of climate change. This area corresponds to a future Flood Zone B as represented by a combination of such zones from each of the datasets listed in Section 5 above.



W I C K L O W

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES