

**BLESSINGTON LOCAL AREA DRAFT PLAN:**

Frank Smyth,

[REDACTED]  
Blessington,

Co Wicklow.  
[REDACTED]

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

03 DEC 2024

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

03 DEC 2024

PLANNING DEPT.

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

TO: "BLESSINGTON LAP", Administrative Officer, Planning Section, Wicklow County Council,  
Station Road, Wicklow Town.

Dear Sir / Madam.

I write in relation to the Blessington Local Area Draft Plan. May I state that I am not against the expansion of housing stock in our local area combined with walkways, playgrounds, tennis courts and all other ancillary supports, with the CAVEAT that I believe there must be a balance between new developments and existing households and existing estates.

Living in Deerpark Estate, Blessington, it is very clear to see many changes taking place over a whole gambit of areas in a very short period of time. Deerpark Estate and indeed surrounding estates are some twenty-seven years old, the then young first occupants of the estates with their young families have now matured into greater adulthood with their then babies now adults with some already starting the next generation whilst still having to live with their parents. As we know circumstances, in the main due to poor national management, dictate the next generation having many obstacles placed in front of them in achieving life's goals.

In Blessington when estates were first built, homes may have had one to two cars, now days with grown up families this figure has expanded to double and more cars per household, the evidence is there for all to see especially in the evenings when folk return after a day's toil.

The local schools are expanding apace, indeed it would seem never a summer goes by without the Blessington Community School adding more class rooms. The sheer volume of traffic pertaining to this school, mornings and evenings has simply expanded exponentially, as I am sure with all other schools within the surrounding area.

Aside of any new developments, the community of Blessington is expanding a pace as of itself, a fact that does not seem to be taken into account, or factored into any new developments.

The local GAA club is a thriving entity with senior male / female teams and also a very large, fast growing under age section. Beside the GAA club is the NUMBER 1 SCHOOL and also KARE FACILITY. With the development of Sorrel wood, the roadway from Kelly's roundabout to GAA roundabout, now has a new, extra entry / exit point from the estate, with another new entry / exit onto the BIRR. A further two entry / exit points are planned in Cairns next development on opposite side of this road.(329 dwellings)

Along with everything else expanding in Blessington, the volume of growth in CRESCHEs is also there for all to see, indeed CAIRN HOMES at their Sorrel Wood site, on the Blessington Inner Relief Road, have recently put up for sale a "Crèche opportunity" newly built premises, further illustrating such expansion and a greater movement of children pertaining to the BIRR area.

The Town of Blessington has always been associated with QUARRYING. The vast trucks carrying sand, gravel, rocks can be seen on their daily journeys through and around the streets of Blessington along with many other vehicles.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 Glenveagh Homes Ltd were granted planning permission (20184) for their site on the Blessington Inner Relief Road. Which consisted of a 120 bed Nursing Care Home with 60 car parking spaces. The development also included 77 dwelling units with provision for 100 car parking spaces. Also included were two new entries / exits, one of which was onto the BIRR and the second was between the BIRR and the main street of Blessington.

This Glenveagh Homes site seems to be superseded by MARSHALL YARDS DEVELOPMENT with new planning application 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (2460656) for mixed development of 233 dwelling units, a medical centre and a café, also providing 341 car parking spaces, with similar entry / exits as afforded to Glenveagh.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Cairn Home Properties Ltd were granted planning permission (201146) for one of their sites on the Blessington Inner Relief Road (Sorrel Wood). A mix of 91 houses with some 150 car spaces. Included was the Glen Ding Walkway, a park, tennis courts and other sporting facilities with provision of some 22 car spaces. Also included were two new entries / exits, one of which was a new opening onto the BIRR and the second, an opening between Kelly's Roundabout and the GAA Roundabout.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 Cairn Home Properties Ltd were granted planning permission (23689) by Wicklow Co Co for their site at GAA grounds. A mix of 329 residential units with approx. 650 car spaces. This permission also included the extension of the BIRR to N81. Also included are two entry / exit openings, one onto roadway from Kelly's roundabout to GAA roundabout and second opening onto the proposed extension to N81!

This permission has been refused by An Bord Pleanála as there is a problem with land zoning, with permission for extension of N81 granted.

All of the above planning permissions would provide many, many hundreds of new most welcome family units, with hundreds upon hundreds of car parking spaces to cater for new homes, visitors, play grounds, walkway, crèches etc.

All of the above developments about the BIRR, there by usurping all potential future housing development land along the BIRR.

The Blessington Inner Relief Road over a short number of years, with the natural expansion of existing families and the development of Sorrel Wood has become progressively busier. The BIRR which served Deerpark, Deerpark Court, Downshire Park and indeed other local estates, is now to host three more substantial housing developments, this combined with existing developments, with the vast Downshire Park with its vast array of houses and apartments considered the largest. It would seem with the combination of new and old estates abutting the BIRR the majority of housing / family dwellings rest on the Blessington Town side of BIRR.

As already stated the population of Blessington is rapidly expanding of itself and with the delivery of Sorrel Wood the overall volumes of traffic within the area has increased greatly. Trying to make right turns on ingress and egress at entrance to estates has become perilous especially at peak times of day. The proposed new housing developments along the BIRR will simply exacerbate this situation – with the potential of residents experiencing gridlock in their own estates and in the long run this will have a negative impact on the monetary values of existing properties.

The BIRR is now the main artery for a large number of family dwellings both new and old, were the Blessington Inner Relief Road to be formally linked up to the N81, thereby turning the BIRR into a NATIONAL SECONDARY ROAD – N81, it would simply be a recipe for disaster with obvious potential fatalities.

Given what is already taking place on the BIRR it is breath taking to think on the one hand planners are granting planning permissions for supply of hundreds of family housing units on both sides of the BIRR, with children's play parks, tennis courts, walkways, schools, Crèche, GAA etc. etc. on the Glending side and on the other hand planners consider the BIRR fit to be turned into a NATIONAL SECONDARY ROAD – N81, this is simply farcical.

It is difficult to imagine children from all areas directly surrounding BIRR and those children travelling from near and afar trying to negotiate in safety their way across a NATIONAL SECONDARY ROAD – N81 to access the play areas, walkways, schools and Crèches – a recipe for disaster and potential fatalities.

The new entrance from Sorrel Wood onto the BIRR is questionable in that this new entrance unlike all the other estate entrances along the BIRR has no right hand turning lane. From the entrance to Sorrel Wood to Kelly's roundabout THE WIDTH OF THE BIRR along this section is questionable in relation to supporting a NATIONAL SECONDARY ROAD – N81. This would seem the reason this section of roadway has been governed by DOUBLE WHITE LINES from day one, one presumes the council, in their wisdom, knowing this fact, decided in the interests of health and safety of road users applied double white lines. This means the residents of SORREL WOOD are in continuous breach of the rules of the road whilst entering and exiting their estate.

The matter of the width of this roadway would be of great significance to On Bord Pleanála pertaining to their BORD ORDER ABP – 319657-24

From LAP, A2.2 Role and function of settlement.

“The N81 national secondary road passes directly through the town centre. It is intended to realign the current route of the N81 to the west of the town. The National road design office has published a preferred route corridor for the N81 realignment between Tallaght and Hollywood Cross. There is a need to appropriately manage the development of lands located in the current route corridor for the N81 realignment. The development of this route and the completion of the town inner relief road, would contribute significantly to the enhancement of the overall quality of the town centre. In the short term the priority shall be the completion of the partly constructed inner relief road in conjunction with Kildare County Council”.

The national roads authority is stating “THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ROUTE AND THE COMPLETION OF THE TOWN INNER RELIEF ROAD” see attached map, they are most certainly not saying that the BIRR is to become the N81.

It would seem there is no balance between what WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL is now proposing and the reality of existing households, recent planning permissions granted, existing estates pertaining to the area of the BIRR. WICKLOW CO CO is forcing a solution on the people of Blessington, especially those that live in family homes abutting the BIRR. It is incomprehensible to think management are so out of tune, misguided by a few with the reality of the situation. Trying to solve the problem of traffic volumes through the main street of Blessington by diverting this same traffic onto the Blessington Inner Relief Road after granting numerous planning permissions for hundreds of new family dwelling units, children’s park, tennis courts, walk way etc. all abutting the BIRR!

The facts that pertain on the ground have simply out run, out grown the councils and indeed other voluntary local organisations thinking.

Some six years ago John Brady T D hosted a well-attended meeting in St Kevin’s Hall, Blessington, where he displayed two options for N81 bypass. One was through Roadstone property up to the GAA grounds and on to the Blessington / Naas Road.

The second option was through, now semi redundant “DORANS PIT” down onto the lake shore and re-joining the N81.

The N81 problem should have been dealt with many years ago, the route through DORANS PIT or the GAA option would have been the least troublesome. The DORANS PIT option at lake side would have to run in tandem with greenway, or simply the greenway will have to make way for the greater need / good of the population.

The attached map shows the preferred route corridor for the N81 by the NATIONAL ROADS DESIGN OFFICE, which would be the GAA option.


In granting planning permission 201146 to Cairn Homes June 2021, in strident language conditions 8A and 8B were set out. This housing development has been completed and occupied yet the conditions have not been met.

The difficulties pertaining to GLENDING HOUSING ESTATE cannot be repeated or mirrored in any form.

We await to see if indeed the local infrastructure pertaining to land quality, supply of water, sewage capacity, electricity, accessibility and lack of pollutants reaching our supply of fresh water are in place.

The Editorial in the "BLESSINGTON NEWS AND ADVERTISER" Issue # 9 is telling.

Yours Sincerely,



F. Smyth.

**FOR SALE**

# Crèche Opportunity

Blessington

Approx. 5,802 sq ft BER G

Sales Enquiries

045 832020

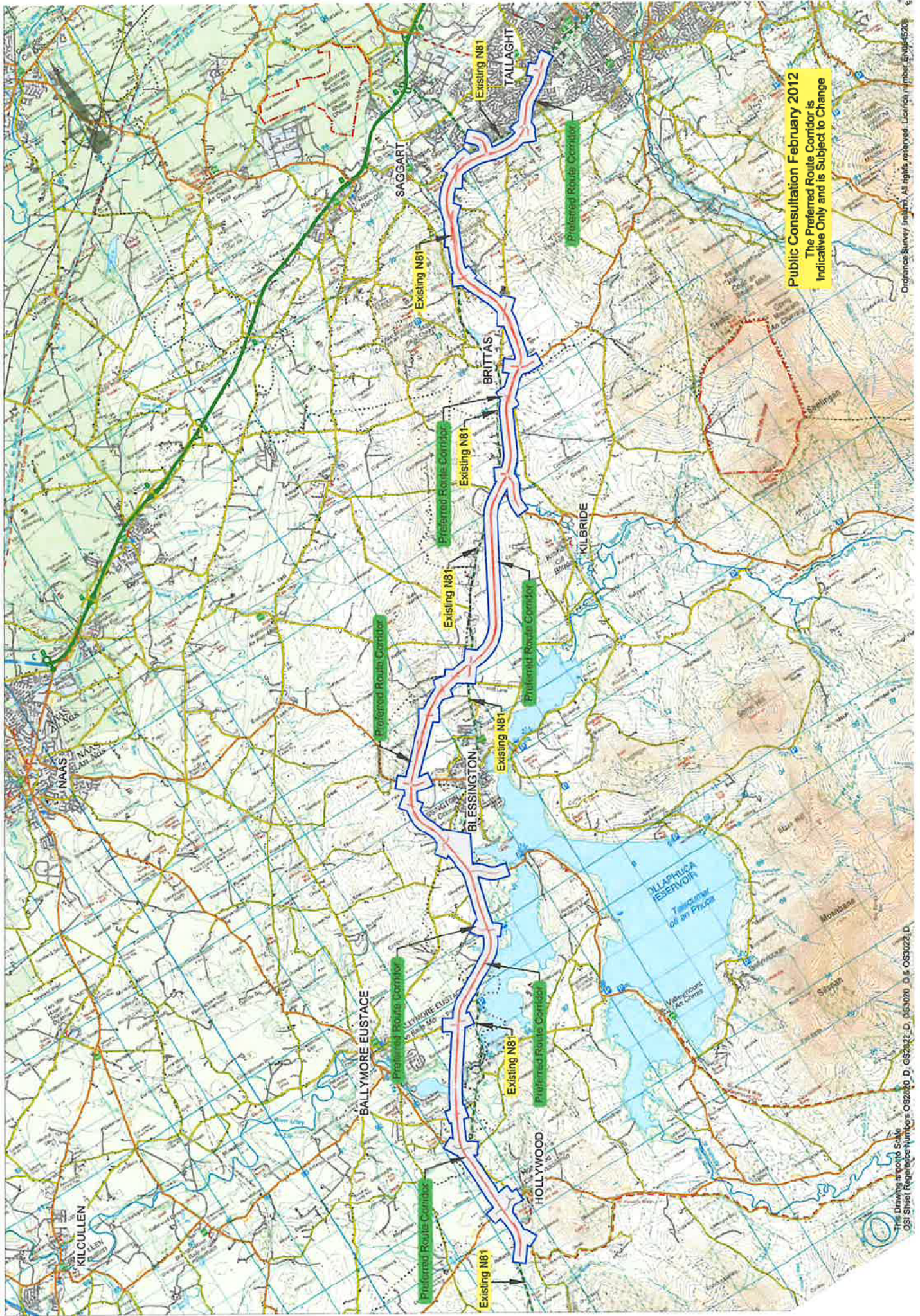
Info@coonan.com



PIRA No. 88244







Public Consultation February 2012  
The Preferred Route Corridor is  
Indicative Only and is Subject to Change



**DRAFT**  
**Blessington**  
**Local Area Plan 2025**

**Map No. 4**  
**Flood Risk**




**LEGEND**


 **Blessington Settlement Boundary**

 **Flood Zone A: High probability of flooding**

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: Moderate probability of flooding**

Where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding)

 **Area of Potential Future Flood Risk**

Indicative future scenario flood zones

**Disclaimer**

These indicative flood zones were based on information available at the time of drafting this plan. Any new data and analysis carried out after this date has not been integrated into this map but should be used in conjunction with this map for development proposals. All information may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

Full Disclaimer is included in SFRA.

**WICKLOW COUNTY**  
**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**  
**2022-2028**



Wicklow County Council  
Planning Department

© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved.  
Licence number: 2024/35CCMA/Wicklow County Council

Scale NTS

# BLESSINGTON NEWS & ADVERTISER



Your Local News and Advertiser

NOVEMBER 2024

ISSUE NO.9

## Blessington Local Area Draft Plan. *Have Your Say!*

The Blessington Local Area Plan 2025 (LAP) is currently available in a DRAFT form for community consideration. This draft is a 78-page document that addresses various community interests and outlines significant developments expected from 2025 to 2031. It includes both a written statement and several maps and illustrations that visually represent its contents. The document covers a range of topics, including Population and Housing, Economic Development and Employment, Community Infrastructure and Open Space, Heritage and the Natural Environment, Transport and Service Infrastructure, Town Centre Regeneration, Tourism, and Land Zoning.

The LAP is structured within a hierarchy of plans spanning national, regional, and local levels. Blessington is classified as a Level 3 settlement within this framework, recognized as a self-sustaining growth town. Blessington also serves as a service center for a broader rural area that includes the villages of Hollywood, Manor Kilbride, Lackan, Ballyknockan, Dunlavin, Donard, and Valleymount.

As a Level 3 settlement, Blessington is projected to have a population ranging from 7,000 to 15,000 and should ideally be equipped with the following community infrastructure:

- Multi-purpose Community Resource Centre
- Sports and Recreation Centre
- Swimming Pool/Leisure Centre
- Youth Resource Centre
- Local Multi-Purpose Community Space/Meeting Rooms
- Outdoor Water Sports Facilities (where applicable)
- Neighbourhood and Local Parks
- Outdoor Multi-Use Games Areas (Synthetic/Hardcourt)
- Playgrounds
- Playing Pitches
- Facilities for Alternative/Minority Sports
- Open Spaces, Urban Woodlands, and Nature Areas
- Library
- Arts and Cultural Centre

While the LAP provides a framework for development, it does not determine which specific

projects will be executed. The document states 'the realization of these objectives will depend on private development initiatives or the allocation of public funds through the annual budget process, which operates independently of the LAP.' Once the LAP is presented, discussed, and amended, the Wicklow County Council will adopt and manage it.

The LAP will feed-in to other relevant plans such as the Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan, the Wicklow Climate Action Plan, the Wicklow Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan, the Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan, and the Wicklow Heritage Plan. All these plans complement the LAP.

The Draft Plan is open for public consultation until Wednesday, December 11, 2024. Additional details about the draft plan and instructions for submission can be found online at <https://blessington-wicklow.hub.arcgis.com/>.

**A Public Information Day will be held at the Civic Offices in Oak Drive, Blessington Business Park, on Thursday, November 21, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM and from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.** The Plan Team will be available throughout the day to answer any questions regarding the draft plan.

For more information, additional details are available from Wicklow County Council's notification on page 3 of our newsletter.

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

***Page 2 Editorial***

***Page 3 Wicklow County Council Draft LAP 2025***

***Page 4-5 Community Notices***

***Page 6-7 West Wicklow Heritage***

***Page 8 Matty Cooks/ Kids Corner***

***Page 9-10 Trades & Services Ads***

***Page 11 Local News***

***Page 12 Sports***



Greetings to all our readers and advertisers.

Our front page leader presents a formal synopsis of the upcoming Blessington five-year Local Area Plan (LAP) in draft format, which Wicklow County Council is presently putting forward for public discussion.

Ears to the ground feedback from the community reaching us is a lot less diplomatic.

There seems to be a common belief that the plan is merely a formality and is seen as a way to rubber-stamp failures of the government's national planning strategy. The perception is that, as with the previous five-year plan, little or nothing will come of their input. Recent events have further intensified expressions of such cynicism within the community.

For example, Wicklow received no funding from the recent Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) program, leaving many residents not only disappointed but advocates for a swimming pool and multi-use sports facility in West Wicklow particularly feeling bitter. After years of campaigning and extensive lobbying for funds to advance these projects, they have been snubbed and struggle to understand why leisure and sports facilities prioritized in the LAP are not being delivered.

On transport issues, the dreadful state of the 65 bus service remains unchanged, and the introduction of a new 65A schedule is viewed as designed just to cater to the recently placed asylum seekers' encampment at Crooksling. There are no new stops or shelter infrastructure along the entire N81 bus route. The local link bus service also needs designated bus stop signposts with real time timetables and shelters.

Despite a newspaper report in July indicating that a prominent TD had received assurances from Bus Éireann about doubling the frequency of the 132 bus starting in September, this change did not occur. During a meeting at Wicklow County Council in October, top executives from the NTA similarly stated that service improvements were imminent, nothing has materialized. As we are already moving to the end of November, we are still waiting..

Analecky Cross, previously reported by us as a neglected and dangerous bus stop, has got worse. Without a designated bus stop or shelter and councillors doing nothing about it, commuters have found their own solution. Using the narrow layby on the side of the road, an informal and unregulated park-and-ride facility has been innovated. Parked cars with their headlights glaring into oncoming traffic can be seen with passengers awaiting the early morning 132 to come into view. Then its hail the bus to stop and find a gap in the traffic to cross the road in the dark.

The decade-long campaign to upgrade the N81, which runs from Tallaght to Hollywood Cross—including constructing a dual carriageway section and the Blessington village bypass has been entirely removed from the government's National Development Plan for 2018-2027. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) revealed that the advancement of this scheme can no longer be included in the national roads program. This decision is viewed as yet another disregard for residents, thousands of whom had signed a petition presented to the Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Shane Ross to deal with the N81 congestion and safety issues. According to the councillor leading the campaign, "he didn't even have the courtesy to acknowledge receipt of the petition, he just passed the buck on to TII".

In the draft document for the Local Area Plan, the pedestrianization of the town centre is envisioned and accompanied by various maps and artistic impressions. However, Blessington Main Street would need to be bypassed to implement the plan. This raises the question of where the traffic will be redirected, but the LAP draft does not provide an answer. While there is some technical chatter, a definitive map outlining the Blessington Village Main Street bypass route is not included. The chatter however seems to suggest that the Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR) will be the route, but sections of the BIRR have not been completed and roads leading on and off at least two of its many roundabouts just merge but go nowhere.

An informal alternative route has emerged, allowing traffic from the N81 to divert onto Oak Drive at the Maxol junction. This route passes by several key locations, including the entrance to Aldi, the children's playground, the Oak Drive Housing Estate, the Business Park, the Fire Station and the entrance to the Woodleigh Housing Estate. After turning left at the roundabout it continuing along Oak Drive between a planned new housing complex on the left and the newly constructed Sorrel Wood housing estate on the right. If the new development on the left proceeds, there will be housing estates on both sides of the road, each featuring multiple entrances and exits onto the main thoroughfare, including access to the new soon-to-be-opened Blessington Park and Playground. The current LAP draft includes an aerial photo of the area but inaccurately represents the already-built Sorrel Wood housing estate as green fields. The road continues toward another roundabout and then passes the entrance to the established Downshire Park housing estate on the left and, a bit further on, the entrance to the Glen Ding Deerpark housing estate on the right before joining the Naas Road roundabout and returning to the N81 via the R410 passing Blessington Community College. Then along the N81 towards Hollywood passing the entrances to Burgate Industrial and Housing Estate.

Given the numerous housing estates, businesses, park and college entrances along this impromptu route, it should be classified as a 'traffic calming' area rather than an make-shift bypass. It sticks out as a sore thumb in terms of the lack of town planning by the authorities and needs an official explanation.

The route is already carrying an increased volume of traffic. If it is adopted as a designated alternative bypass of Blessington Village, we can expect a massive increase in traffic. Such an influx of traffic is likely to lead to excessive speed, noise, air pollution, frustration, and disruptions for both businesses and residents along the route. The official bypass route needs to be mapped and shown clearly in the LAP draft document. At the moment we are left guessing.

Brian Rice  
Editorial

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*If you have something to say, please keep in mind the following rules and conditions:*

*We will not publish any letters that we deem offensive or defamatory to any person or organization.*

*We reserve the right to reject letters entirely or shorten them without compromising or distorting the main subject matter.*

*All letters must include the full name of the author.*

*It's alright to comment or reply to a previously published letter, but if we believe that the response is inappropriate or leads to an unproductive argument, we reserve the right not to accept the post.*

*Remember, 'Free speech is essential, but it must be exercised responsibly'.*

*We welcome your contributions so sharpen your quill and we look forward to hearing from you.*

Email to: [blessonews@ruralpress.ie](mailto:blessonews@ruralpress.ie)

Post to: Editorial, Unit 3 Aran Centre, Blessington, W91PR24