

Blessington LRD

Accessibility Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

DBFL Consulting Engineers (DBFL) have been commissioned by Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd to prepare this Accessibility Report as part of the proposed Blessington Large Residential Development (LRD) application on a greenfield site within the townlands of Blessington Demense, Blessington, Co. Wicklow.

The application is for a mixed-use development with buildings ranging from 1 to 5 storeys. It includes 233 residential dwellings (24 one-bedroom, 103 two-bedroom, 94 three-bedroom, and 12 four-bedroom units), 36 'later living' dwellings (12 one-bedroom and 24 two-bedroom units), a medical centre, a pharmacy, and a café. The proposed development also includes 341 no. car parking spaces and 414 no. cycle parking spaces.

1.2 Scope of Report

As part of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, Objective CPO 6.20 states;

*"New significant residential or mixed use development proposals shall be required to be accompanied by a '**Accessibility Report**' that demonstrates that new residents/ occupants/ employees (including children and those with special mobility needs) will be able to safely access through means **other than** the private car:*

- a) local services including shops, schools, health care and recreational facilities, and*
- b) public transport services.*

Where deficiencies are identified, proposals will be required to either rectify the deficiency, or suitably restrict or phase the development in accordance with the capacity/quality of existing or planned linkages."

Therefore, the main objective of the report is to identify the key routes for people travelling between the subject site and local services and public transport stops and consequently, any barriers to accessing these services. Any areas where safety and accessibility can be improved for vulnerable road users in direct conjunction with the proposed development will also be identified.

This report first identifies what facilities are in the local area and through the use of ArcGIS Network Analysis identifies what areas are within walking distance of the proposed development. The analysis assesses facilities that are within 5, 10 and 15 minute walking distance from the centre

of the proposed development to highlight the '15-Minute Town' model, considering the overall accessibility of facilities.

2 Development Description

2.1 Overview

The application is for mixed-use development with buildings ranging from 1 to 5 storeys. It includes 233 residential dwellings (24 one-bedroom, 103 two-bedroom, 94 three-bedroom, and 12 four-bedroom units), 36 'later living' dwellings (12 one-bedroom and 24 two-bedroom units), a medical centre, a pharmacy, and a café. The proposed site layout is shown in **Figure 2-1** below.



Figure 2-1: Proposed Site Layout

2.2 Proposed Pedestrian and Cyclist Access

The proposed scheme has been designed to maximise the pedestrian and cyclist connectivity between the scheme and the wider transport network. As such, pedestrians and cyclists can enter and exit the proposed development at 7 no. locations. These site access locations are shown below in **Figure 2-2**.

Of these access points, 5 no. are dedicated for pedestrians and cyclists only. These proposed accesses will be provided on:

- 1 no. accesses on the Link Road on the southwestern boundary of the site;
- 2 no. accesses on the Inner Relief Road on the western boundary of the site;
- 1 no. potential future connection to the north; and
- 1 no. access on the eastern boundary of site allowing access to the N81 Main Street and the Blessington Town Centre.

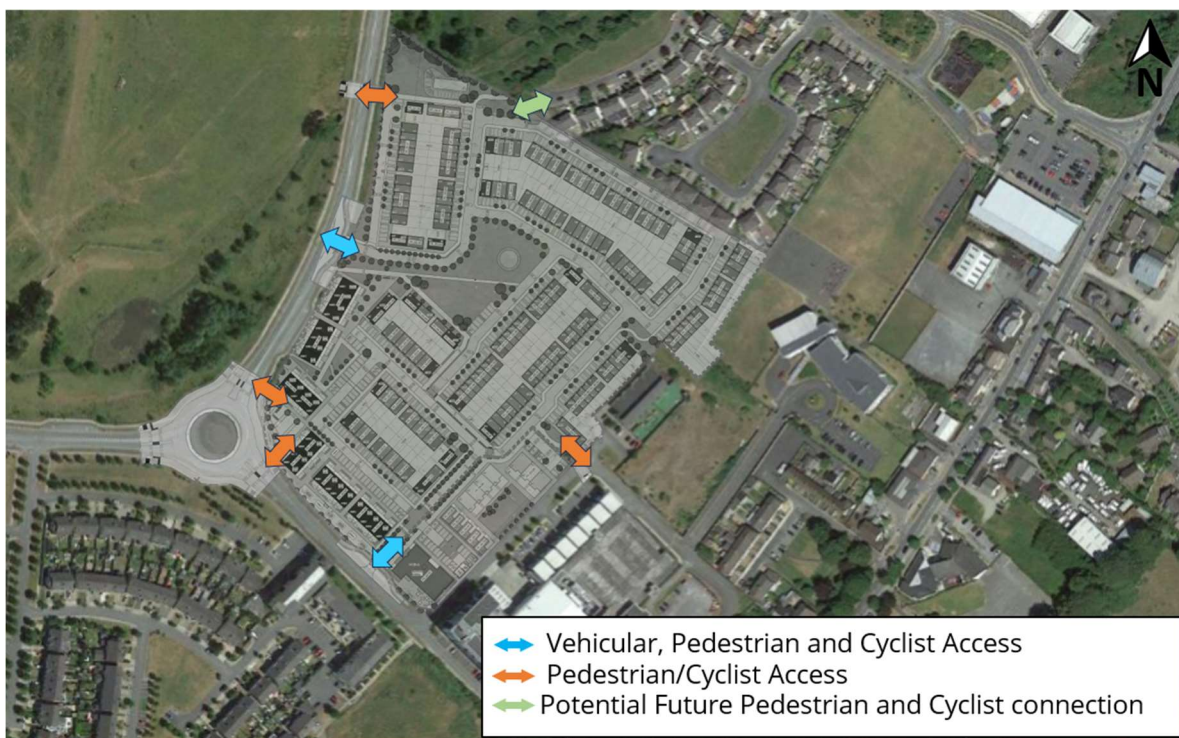


Figure 2-2: Proposed Development Access Locations

As part of the proposed development, the pedestrian and cyclist connectivity will be significantly enhanced through the delivery of the following:

- New raised Toucan crossing on the Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR), located adjacent the north west corner of the site (as shown in **Figure 2-3**). The proposed raised toucan drawing is shown on Signage and Line Marking 230199-X-90-Z00-DTM-DR-DBFL-C-1203.
- Upgraded pedestrian and cyclist crossings over each arm of the BIRR roundabout, located at the western site boundary, in accordance with the Cycle Design Manual (as shown in **Figure 2-4**). The proposed raised toucan drawing is shown on Signage and Line Marking 230199-X-90-Z00-DTM-DR-DBFL-C-1203.
- New raised combined zebra crossing over the local street at the southeastern site boundary (as shown in **Figure 2-5**).
- Raised, continuous footpath and cycle tracks at both vehicular entrances (as shown in **Figure 2-6**)

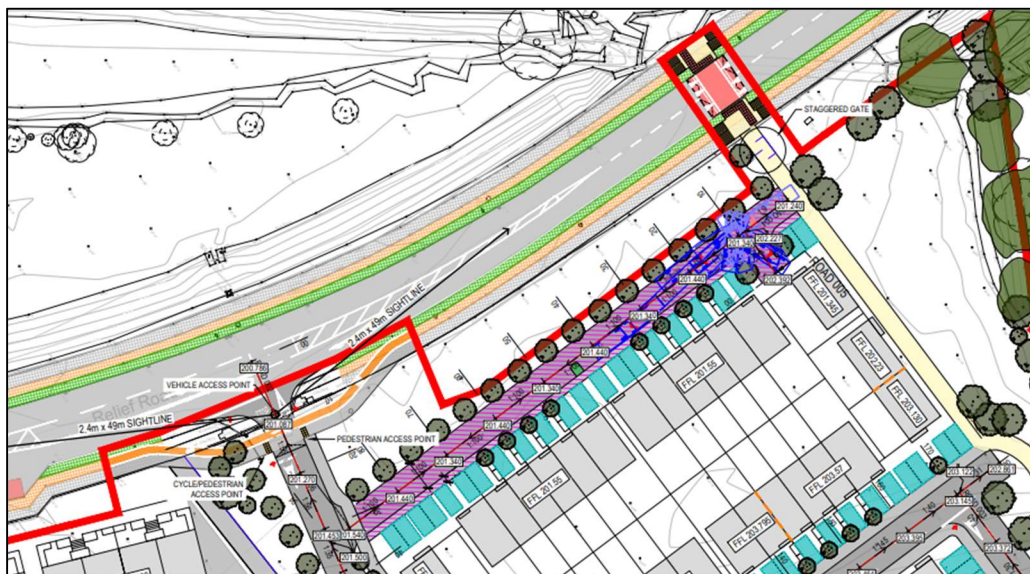


Figure 2-3: Proposed Raised Toucan on BIRR

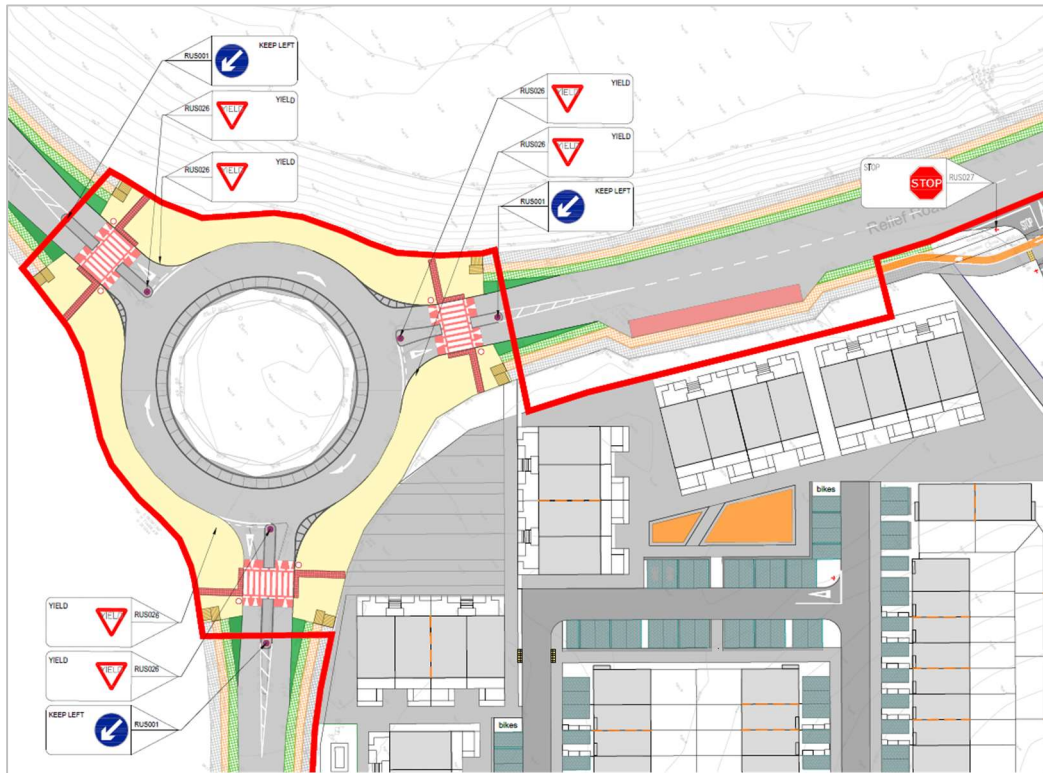


Figure 2-4: Proposed Upgraded Roundabout on BIRR (Extract from Drawing 230199-X-90-DTM-DR-DBFL-CE-1203.

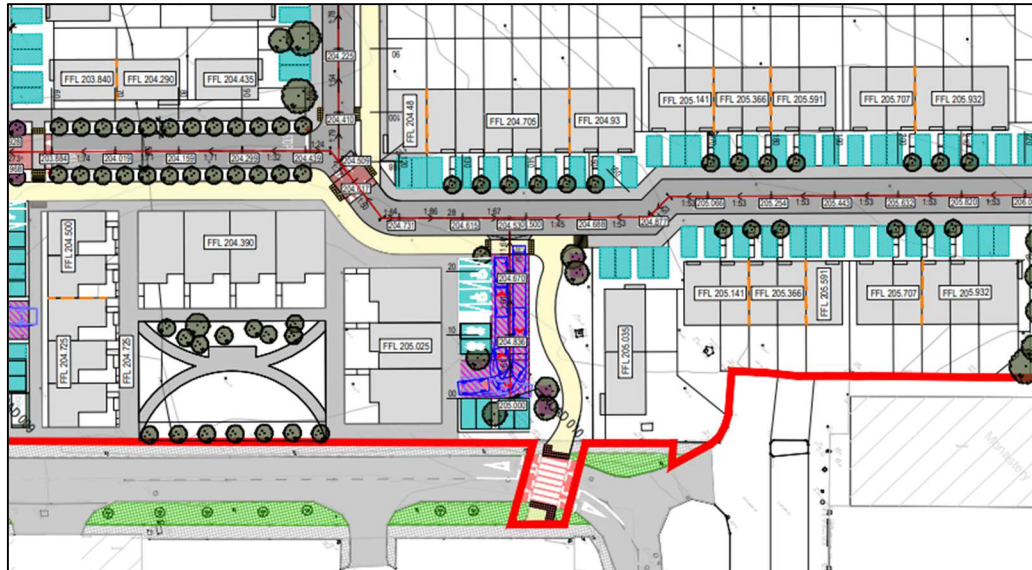


Figure 2-5: Proposed Raised Combined Zebra Crossing



Figure 2-6: Proposed Continuous Raised Footpath and Cycle Tracks at Entrances

The well-connected internal network of pedestrian and cyclist routes within the subject site, in tandem with the enhancements illustrated above, will encourage residents of the subject development to undertake local trips by foot or by bike.

The internal site network plus the improvements to crossing facilities outlined above will be designed in accordance with current design standards, including the Cycle Design Manual, and will therefore be fully accessible to people with mobility and visual impairments. The accessibility of the wider network in terms of accessing local services, amenities and facilities from the subject site is discussed in the following sections of this report.

3 Pedestrian Catchment Analysis

3.1 Overview

This section sets out the wide range of local services, facilities and amenities along with public transport services within Blessington town. To quantify pedestrian accessibility and navigability to these local services from the subject site, a pedestrian catchment analysis has been undertaken using ArcGIS Network Analysis.

This analysis enables the walking times from the subject site to each of the services to be clearly demonstrated based on the current pedestrian network.

3.2 Local Services & Amenities

Blessington has a wide range of local services and amenities. These include shops, schools, health care, recreation, and public transport facilities. All of these facilities are accessible by foot from the planned development. The location of these key local services and bus stops and the walking time to reach these are illustrated in **Figure 3-1** below.

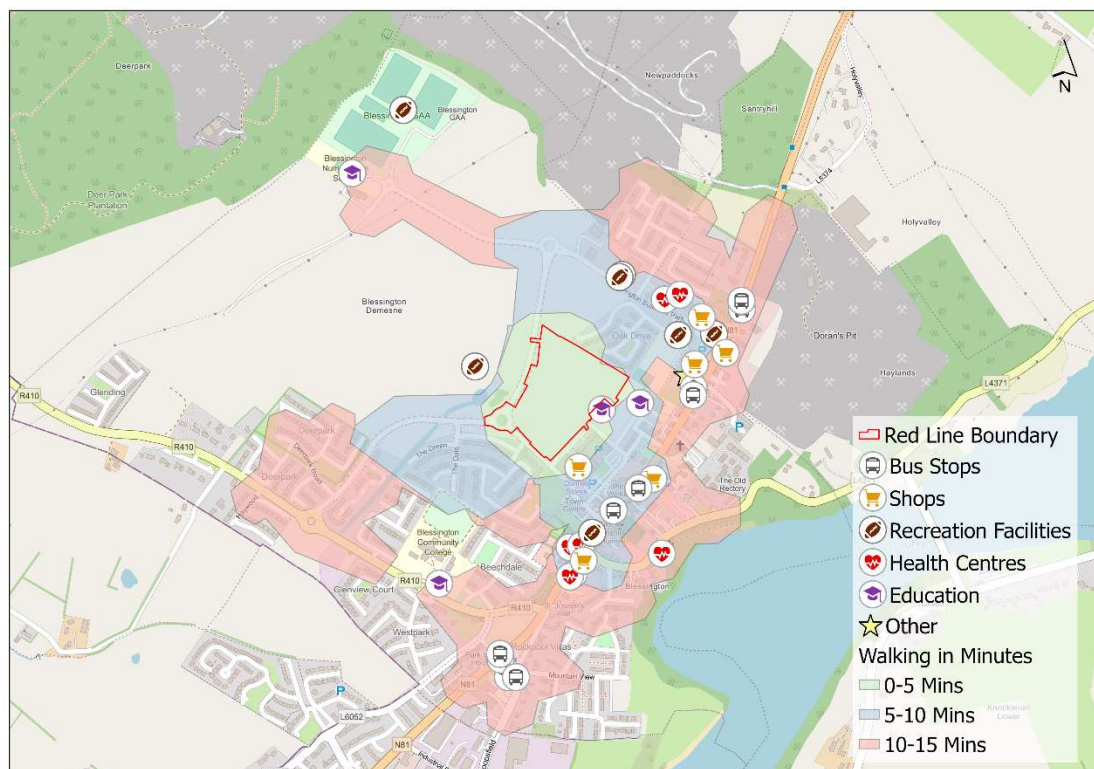


Figure 3-1: Local Amenities within Blessington

Local Shopping Facilities

There are several shops / supermarkets within the town with the closest facility to the development being Dunnes Stores, located directly opposite the south-eastern site boundary. The potential connection to Oak Drive would increase accessibility to Aldi and the other shops to the north of Blessington town. The local shops within a 15 minute walking distance of the subject development are shown in **Figure 3-2**.

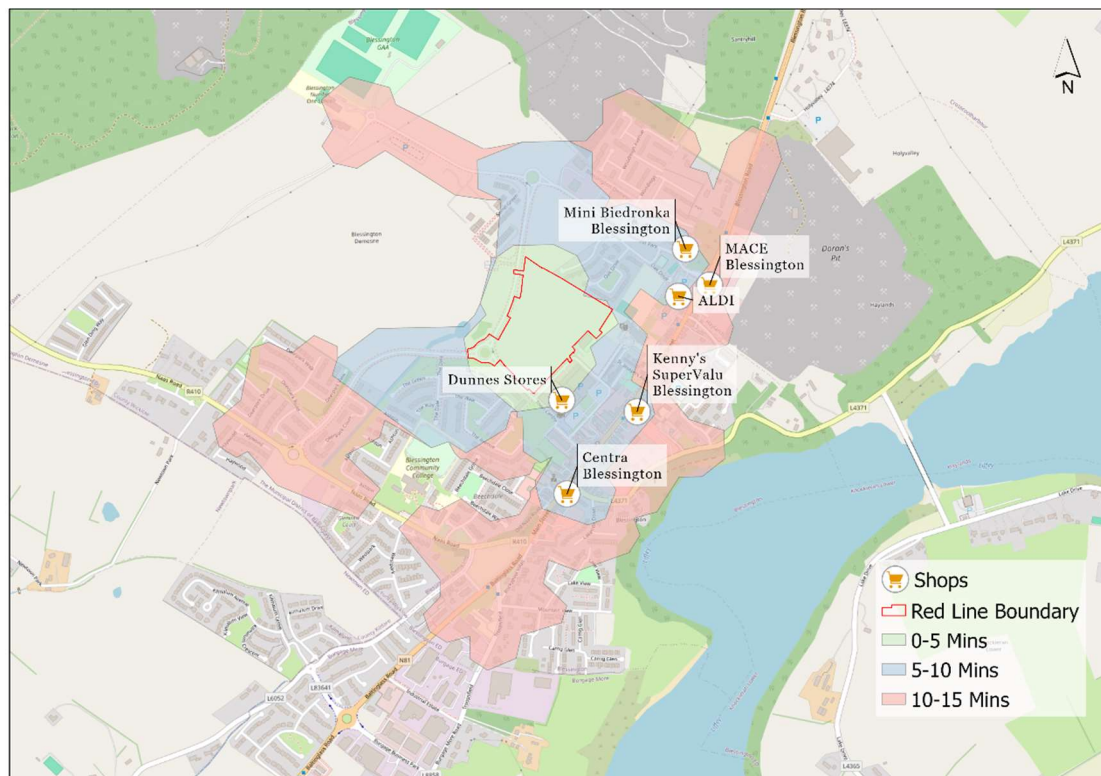


Figure 3-2: Local Shopping in Blessington.

Local Educational Facilities

The town and surrounding area includes several educational facilities including two pre-schools, four primary schools, a secondary school and a third level education centre. The primary schools are distributed evenly around the town with one primary, secondary and third level in the centre itself. The schools are easily reached on foot with at least one school from each level within a 15-minute walk from the subject site. The locations of the educational facilities within Blessington and their walking times to / from the proposed development are shown in **Figure 3-3**.

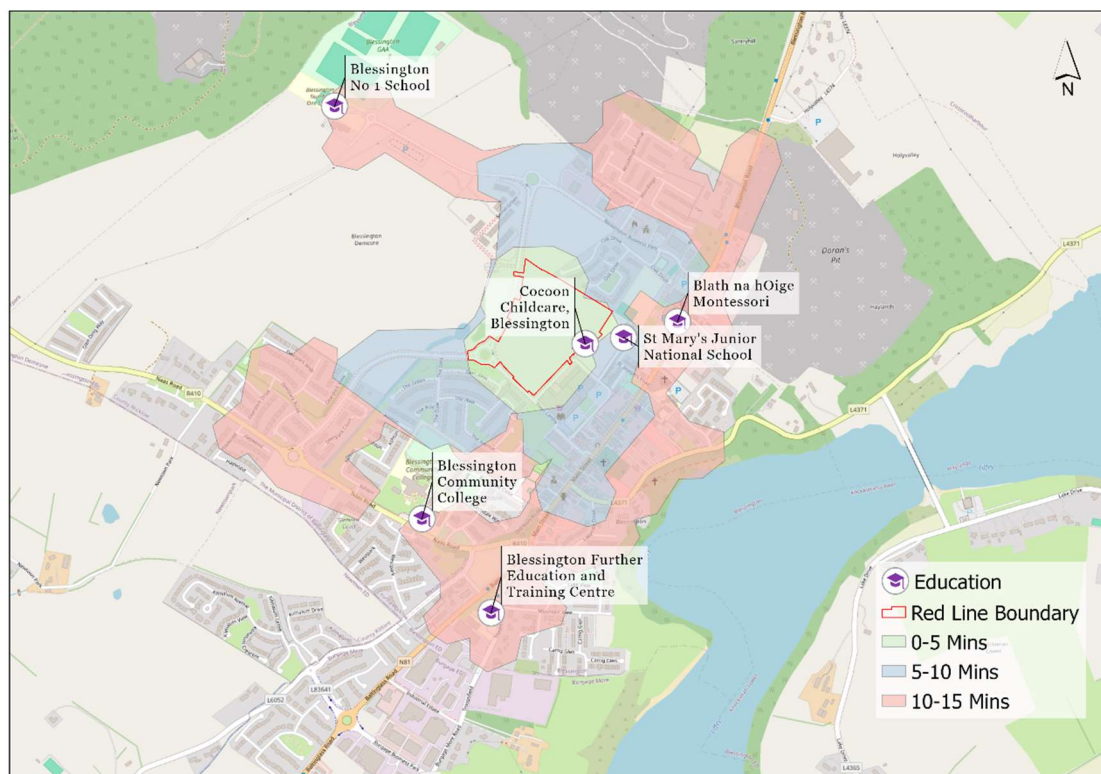


Figure 3-3: Educational Facilities in Blessington.

Local Healthcare Facilities

Health care facilities in the area consist of GPs, pharmacies, Primary Care and a dentist which all but the latter are within a 10 minute walk of the subject site. The healthcare facilities are mainly clustered to the south of the town with two facilities to the north. They are equidistant from the proposed development providing future residents with ample choice. The locations of the Healthcare Facilities within Blessington and their walking times to / from the proposed development are shown in **Figure 3-4**.

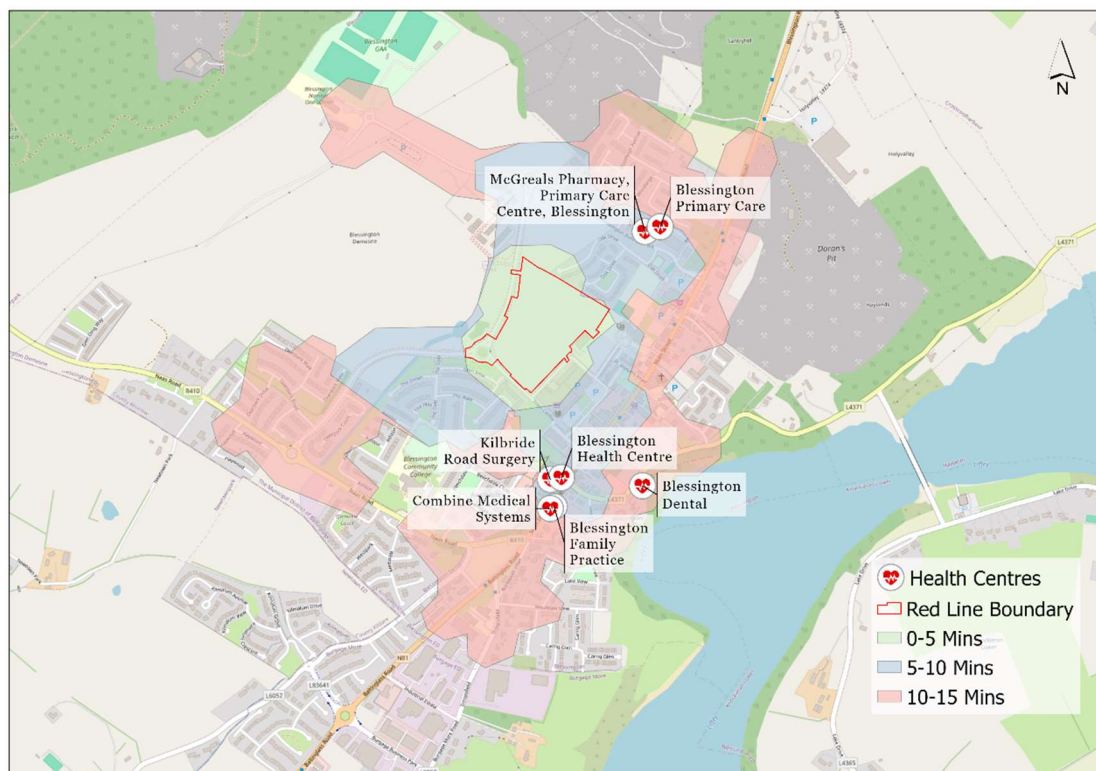


Figure 3-4: Healthcare Facilities in Blessington.

Local Recreational Facilities

A number of recreational facilities are located within Blessington. These consist primarily of gyms and fitness centres. Blessington GAA Club is found at the north of the town on the cusp of the 15 minute walking catchment from the subject development site.

A playground and skatepark are located near the Aldi, and a large new park is being constructed just across the road on the north-west side of the site. Over 15ha in size the park will contain play areas, a fitness trail, a large overall sport playing area, a walled garden and the enhancement of an existing pond and stream.

To the south, just outside of the 15 minute walking catchment, is the Blessington Greenway trail.

The locations of the recreational facilities are shown below in **Figure 3-5**.

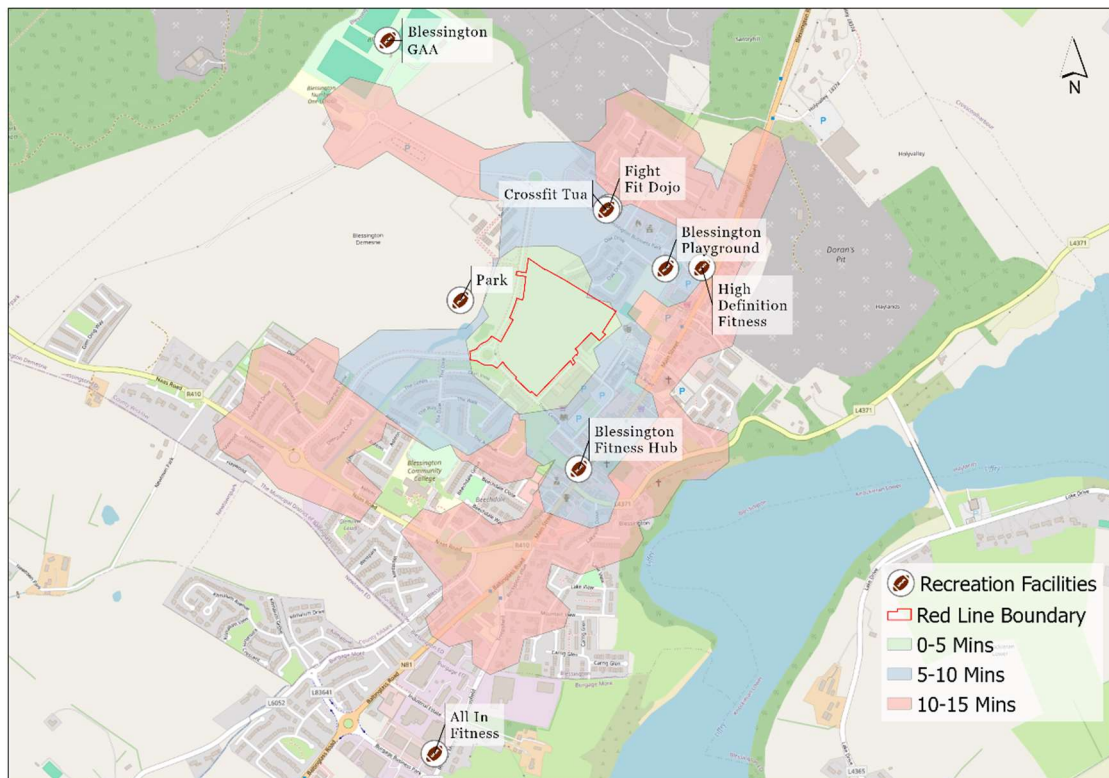


Figure 3-5: Recreational Facilities in Blessington.

Public Transport Services

The main street in Blessington has several bus stops located through the town. Stops number 4051 (Northbound) and 4027 (Southbound) both called 'Blessington' are within a 10-minute walk from the site. This stop is serviced by both the Local Link Carlow Kilkenny Wicklow, and Dublin Bus.

Dublin Bus no. 65 runs along the N81 towards Tallaght (where it connects to the Luas Red Line) and continues directly into Dublin City Centre. The Local Link connects Blessington directly to Sallins Train Station, Newbridge and Naas. These links broaden the facilities available to residents and connect them to key employment centres in the wider surrounding areas.

The locations of the nearby bus stops are shown in **Figure 3-6**.

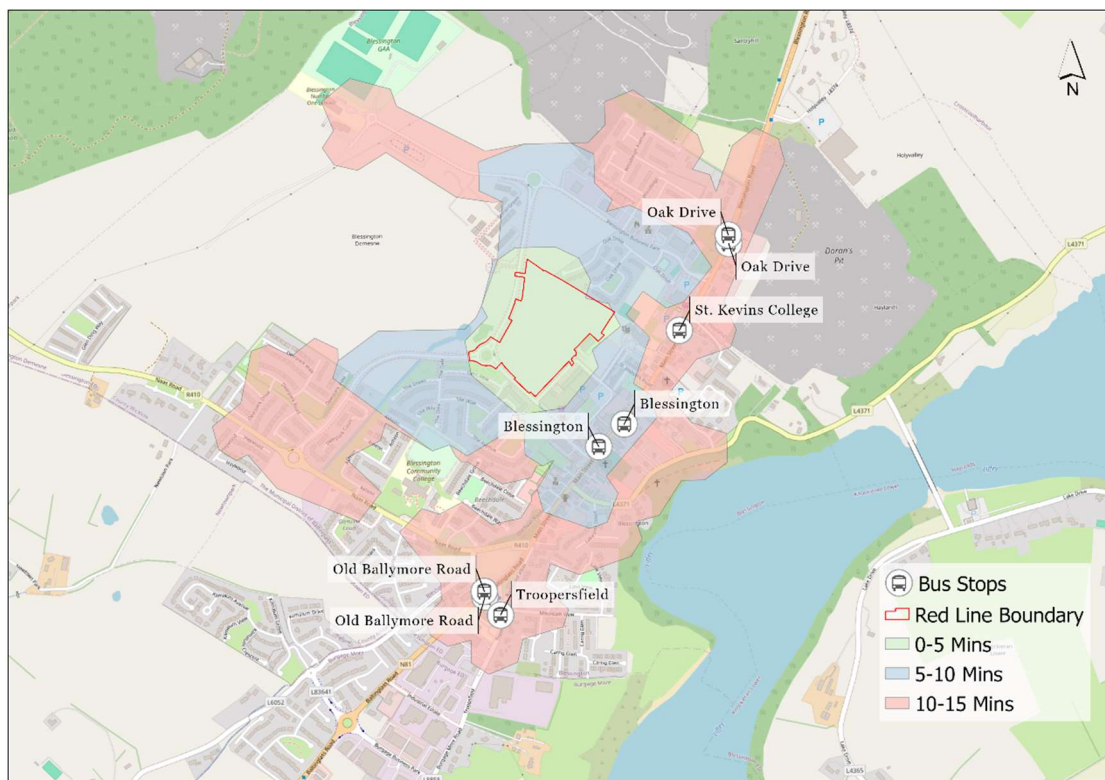


Figure 3-6: Bus Stops within the Walking Catchment.

4 Accessibility to Local Services & Amenities

4.1 Overview

As discussed in Section 3, the catchment analysis indicates that key local services, amenities and facilities are all within a reasonable 15-minute walking distance of the subject development site. The existing pedestrian network within Blessington therefore offers good levels of permeability and connectivity for future residents of the subject residential development wishing to access these local services on foot.

In accordance with Objective CPO 6.20 of the Wicklow Development Plan, there is a requirement to identify areas where there is a deficiency in the accessibility of services in particular regard to children and those with special mobility needs.

The following sections consider whether the existing pedestrian network, in conjunction with the proposed network upgrades being delivered as part of the subject development, will provide suitable levels of accessibility for all users of all abilities, as well as users with other needs such as caregivers with buggies.

4.2 Review of Accessible Routes

Accessibility South of the Site (Town Centre)

All the key facilities in Blessington town centre to the south of the subject site are accessible by foot in 15 minutes or less. As shown in **Figure 4-1**, with the addition of the proposed new raised zebra crossing at the southern site boundary, there will be continuous accessible routes connecting the subject development to the town centre.

It is noted that the green routes indicate 2.0m wide footpaths, whilst the light blue routes indicate footpaths which are less than 2.0m wide but are level, paved surfaces. Existing and proposed crossing points are also indicated, both controlled and uncontrolled. Uncontrolled crossing points which are accessible have been indicated i.e. with dropped kerbs or raised tables plus tactile paving.



Figure 4-1: Accessible Routes from Proposed Development to the South

Accessibility Northeast of the Site

Services and facilities to the northeast of the site include the primary care centres, Montessori and the Aldi supermarket. These areas can also be accessed on foot by accessible routes as shown in **Figure 4-2**.

Accessibility to the north of the site is limited, however the potential connection into Oak Drive would greatly improve accessibility to the north side of the town via the existing footpaths, uncontrolled crossings with dropped curbs and tactile paving along Oak Drive. Similarly, the healthcare facilities on the north side of Oak Drive can be accessed by the existing controlled crossing on Oak Drive.

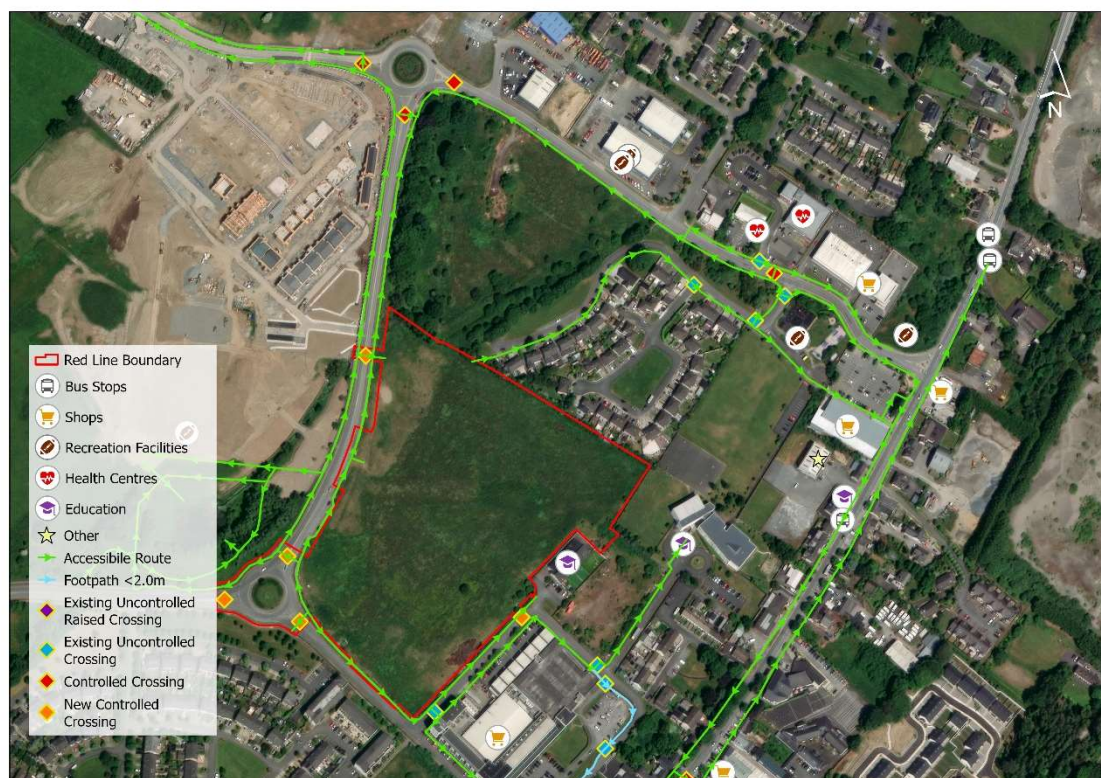


Figure 4-2: Accessible Routes from Proposed Development to the Northeast

Accessibility North of the Site

To the north of the site are key educational and recreational facilities including the Blessington No. 1 School, Blessington GAA Ground and the new parklands. These areas can be accessed on foot by access routes as shown in **Figure 4-3**.

The proposed new raised Toucan crossing on the BIRR, to be delivered as part of the subject development, together with the recent upgrades to the crossings at the Oak Drive / BIRR roundabout to the north of the site, will facilitate safe and accessible connections to these local destinations.



Figure 4-3: Accessible Routes from the Proposed Development to the North

5 Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This Accessibility Report has been prepared by DBFL Consulting Engineers in relation to a residential development proposed by Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd. The proposed development is located on a greenfield site within the townlands of Blessington Demense, Blessington, Co. Wicklow.

The report sought to identify the key routes for people travelling between the subject site and local services, facilities and amenities and consequently, any barriers to accessing these services. This is in accordance with Objective CPO 6.20 of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 which requires new residential developments to demonstrate how new residents, including children and those with special mobility needs will be able to safely access these services by means other than by private car.

A network analysis was undertaken through the use of ArcGIS Network Analysis, along with an audit of the existing network to identify the accessibility of key services, facilities and bus stops within a 15-minute walking distance of the subject development.

5.2 Conclusion

The preceding analysis found that the subject site is well placed in terms of accessing local services, amenities, facilities and public transport within Blessington town. Several enhancements to the existing pedestrian network are proposed as part of the development which will significantly enhance the accessibility characteristics of the site, these include:

- New raised Toucan crossing on the Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR), located adjacent the north west corner of the site
- Upgraded pedestrian and cyclist crossings over each arm of the BIRR roundabout, located at the western site boundary, in accordance with the Cycle Design Manual
- New raised combined zebra crossing over the local street at the southeastern site boundary
- Raised, continuous footpath and cycle tracks at both vehicular entrances

These improvements in conjunction with the existing pedestrian network within the wider Blessington area will provide fully connected and accessible routes for people of all ages and abilities to be able to access key destinations by means other than by private car.



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