

Blackrock Local Area Plan



6. Employment

6.1 Existing Employment

POLICY BK18

It is Council policy to actively support existing employers within Blackrock and encourage renewed investment.

Blackrock is a key employment centre within the County as acknowledged in Section 6.1.3: 'Employment Trends' of the current County Development Plan. Census 2011 data indicates that there were 4,158 jobs located in Blackrock in 2011. This is down from 5,058 in 2006 - a reduction of almost 20%.

Employment uses in the Plan area are predominantly located on lands zoned 'E' - 'To provide for economic development and employment' and 'DC' - 'To protect, provide for and or improve mixed-use district centre facilities' as set out in the County Development Plan. There are 3.8 hectares of 'E' zoned lands and 10 hectares of 'DC' zoned lands within the Plan boundary.

With regard to the lands zoned 'E' these are mainly located within the Blackrock Business Park and the immediate surrounding area. These areas are essentially already well developed with little capacity for further development or intensification. Having regard to the limited quantity of 'E' zoned land currently remaining within Blackrock, any future development on such lands should be restricted to employment-generating uses. Alternative and /or additional uses such as residential development should only be permitted where they complement the primary employment uses and do not restrict the potential to create additional employment.



Photo 71: Nursing Board Sign

With regard to the lands zoned 'DC', these have allowed for 'Office Based' employment uses. The majority of these office developments lie along the Frascati Road corridor and were generally built from the late 1980's onwards in response to the growth of the financial services sector and include Zurich Life, Canada Life and Ulster Bank buildings. There is also limited office space located along the Main Street.

The primary types of employment uses within Blackrock are office-based activity, retail - with significant retailers such as SuperValu, Marks & Spencers and Debenhams, and the service industry. Other reasonably scaled employment generators in the Blackrock area include:

- Educational Institutions (primary, post-primary and third-level)
- State & Semi-state companies (Inland Fisheries Ireland, An Post Sorting Office, An Garda Síochána)

- Professional Services (financial, legal, medical, architectural etc)
- Hospitality and Tourism Sector (restaurants, cafés, public houses)

Existing commercial (office) floorspace available within the Plan area is approximately 32,100m² which, while substantial, represents less than 1% of the County's overall stock.

There is a long history of traditional industry and manufacturing in Blackrock. However, this has gradually disappeared over time to be replaced by office-based and other forms of employment. A large garment factory previously occupied the site now occupied by Blackrock Business Park. A former factory located between Brookfield Terrace and Brookfield Place now accommodates a mix of uses including a gym and a cookery school. Avondale Hall, located on Carysfort Avenue, was originally built as the Meath Industrial Boys School and later operated as a hospital before closing down. Planning permission was granted in 2009 for demolition of the existing stand-alone office buildings surrounding Avondale Hall, refurbishment of Avondale Hall itself for office use and the construction of two new office buildings. This permission has not yet been implemented.



Photo 72: Ulster Bank, Main Street



Photo 73: Blackrock Business Park

6.2 Employment Development

POLICY BK19

It is Council policy to encourage new uses that have the potential for additional employment generation within Blackrock.

The Blackrock LAP seeks to enhance and strengthen Blackrock's function as an employment node within the County. Policies and objectives are targeted to enhance the attractiveness of Blackrock to potential investors and future employers.

Section 16.4: 'Enterprise and Employment' of the current County Development Plan sets out the development standards for enterprise and employment development. Any planning applications for new commercial/enterprise/office development in the Plan area must comply with the requirements set out in this section. Any new development relating to enterprise and employment should also be designed to strengthen and enhance the streetscape and public realm. A design statement and landscaping plan shall be required for commercial and enterprise developments with a minimum floor area of 1,000 m². Where it is considered that a site has particular site sensitivities, the Planning Authority may request a design statement and landscaping plan for developments under the 1,000 m² threshold. High quality materials and finishes should be used that are durable and low maintenance. Mobility management plans are required for commercial development that will result in more than 100 employees. In certain circumstances the Planning Authority may request a mobility management plan for developments with less than 100 employees.



Photo 74: Temple House

Objectives: Employment

E1

It is an objective of the Council to enhance the appearance of and foster an environment in Blackrock in order to signal confidence and create a positive perception for future potential investors and employers.

E2

It is an objective of the Council to ensure that uses on remaining lands zoned 'E' within the Blackrock LAP shall be restricted to employment generating uses unless it can be demonstrated that additional proposed uses complement the employment use and do not restrict the potential to create additional employment.

E3

It is an objective of the Council to encourage improvements to existing and the provision of additional, office floorspace where feasible.

E4

It is an objective of the Council to encourage and support the culture of micro-enterprise activities already established in Blackrock.

E5

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate and encourage the provision of Enterprise Incubator Units.



Photo 75: Blackrock Business Park



Photo 76: Canada Life

6.3 Tourism

POLICY BK20

It is Council policy to promote and secure sustainable tourism activity within Blackrock in conjunction with the appropriate agencies.

Blackrock's coastal setting, rich architectural heritage and proximity to Dublin City Centre, Dún Laoghaire and the Dublin and Wicklow mountains makes it a potential destination for visitors. To date Blackrock has not capitalised on this tourism potential in any structural fashion.

Failte Ireland, in association with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, have identified the coastal area of the County as an area with 'visitor attraction potential' and are in the process of undertaking a Wayfinding Signage Scheme for certain locations along the coast. Blackrock and its amenities are identified as one of the potential visitor destinations.

The appeal of a place is largely dependent on its appearance and vibrancy. Blackrock's coastal setting and attractive built heritage make it an appealing location for visitors. However, to make for an attractive visitor destination there needs to be a high quality public realm. In Blackrock there are currently a number of shortcomings in this regard. Section 3.6 'Public Realm Strategy' identifies a number of objectives for improving the public realm and creating a more legible and friendly pedestrian environment. In particular, the seafront is identified as an area which will be a focus for public realm improvements.

Cultural tourism is an important element of the urban tourism product. Arts and culture greatly add to the character and diversity of a place. There is potential to incorporate greater usage of public open space within Blackrock for arts and culture opportunities. The 'Public Realm Strategy' includes objectives for improving the public realm and open space provision along Blackrock's Main Street and Rock Hill, within Blackrock Park and the areas adjacent to the seafront, in order to improve visitor experience.