



To: Directors of Planning Services, City and County Councils

CC: Chief Executives, City and County Councils
Senior Planners, City and County Councils
Mayor of Limerick
Director General, Limerick City and County Council

An Coimisiún Pleanála
Office of the Planning Regulator
Directors of Regional Assemblies

Circular Letter PLR 04/2026

14 August 2025

Re: Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 and Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Commencement) Order 2026

I have been asked by Minister James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage to advise that he has signed the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Commencement) Order 2026 (S.I. No. 414 of 2026) which has effect from 12 August 2026.

A copy of the Act and the commencement order is attached for information.

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Act of 2026) was signed by the President on 20 July 2026.

The Act of 2026 amends the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Act of 2000) and the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act of 2024) and other enactments, as appropriate.

The purpose of the Act of 2026 is primarily to support and assist in the smooth commencement of the remaining provisions of the Act of 2024, later in 2026. The



Act of 2026 consists of 149 sections set out in 4 Parts and its provisions can largely be grouped into five main themes:

1. Amendments to Part 3 of the Act of 2024

This Act of 2026 provides a 90-week deadline for the completion of the RSES review processes and ensures that the current reviews are completed by end 2027.

The Act of 2026 allows for the current Development Plans to remain in force on a transitional basis, until no later than a specified date between February and December 2030. The relevant date for this purpose is linked to the date on which the relevant Development Plan was made under the Act of 2000. In line with the hierarchy of plan making, the revised end date should act as a trigger for the completion of review of the Development Plans under the Act of 2024 and thereby the timely introduction of 10-year Development Plans. These reviews are expected to commence between July 2027 and May 2028 and be completed in advance of the revised expiration date of the Development Plans made under the Act of 2000.

The Act of 2026 provides for the designation of towns with populations of 10,000 or more as Key Towns.

The Act introduces further transitional arrangements for the transition from the Act of 2000 to the Act of 2024.

2. Amendments to Part 9 of the Act of 2024

This Act will speed up the implementation of the new procedural rules for planning Judicial Review introduced in the Act of 2024 by making the following amendments:

- Applying Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Act of 2024 to decisions made or acts done under the Act of 2000 where specified procedures are commenced under the Act of 2000 after the date of coming into operation of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026;
- Extending the suspension of the duration of permissions due to judicial review in section 180 of the Act of 2024 to permissions under the Act of 2000 that will be subject to judicial review under Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Act of 2024.

3. Amendments to Part 4 of the Act of 2024 related to critical infrastructure projects

The Act includes a number of amendments to Part 4 to speed up the delivery of critical infrastructure projects, including measures committed to in the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce Report and Action Plan 2025 and provides:

- A definition of “material contravention” of the Development Plan to clarify what constitutes a material contravention for the purpose of assessing and determining a planning application.



- Amendment to the eligibility requirements for making certain planning applications in order to clarify the capability of the applicant to make an application;
- Additional flexibility so that a Statutory Undertaker may make a planning application for the distribution of electricity under Chapter 3 of Part 4 and have the development treated as “standard development”, rather than “Chapter 4 development”, as may be applicable;
- An amendment to speed up and streamline certain application processes for development that is wholly or partially in a Maritime Area, by removing the requirement to have a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) and other consents prior to entering into the “Chapter 4 development” planning process, specifically the pre-application consultation process;
- Transitional arrangements for consultations in respect of electricity transmission lines or strategic gas infrastructure carried out under section 182E of the Act of 2000 to be deemed pre-application under the Act of 2024.

4. Amendments for the alignment of Parts 4, 21 and 22 with Part 6

The Act of 2026 provides a number of amendments, on a no-policy change basis, to Part 4, Part 6, Part 21 and Part 22 to clarify the role of competent authority and the environmental screening obligations for both Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in respect of retention permission, retrospective consent, Local Authority Development, State Authority Development, planning schemes (Part 21) and development schemes (Part 22).

5. Technical Amendments and miscellaneous

The Act of 2026 provides a number of technical amendments to correct cross-references, typographical errors and to clarify the existing text without changing its intent. It also amends the Housing Finance Agency Act 1981 in respect of the statutory borrowing limit of the Housing Finance Agency.

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Commencement) Order 2026

The provisions of the Act of 2026 require Commencement Orders in order to bring them into effect. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Commencement) Order 2026 brings the following provisions of the Act of 2026 into effect from 12 August 2026:

- Part 1,
- Chapters 1 (other than paragraph (a) of section 4), Chapter 3 (other than section 29), and Chapters 13 and 14 of Part 2, and
- sections 74, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 115, 140, 141, 142, 143, 148 and 149.



These provisions relate to amendments to sections of the Act of 2024 which have already come into effect.

The remaining provisions will be commenced in due course.

Any queries in relation to this Circular letter should be emailed to planningreform@housing.gov.ie

Mairéad Ross

Mairéad Ross
Principal Officer,
Planning Legislation Reform Unit

Attachment for information:

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026

Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2026 (Commencement) Order 2026