

19 December 2025

To: Mayor of Limerick
Chief Executives and Director General, City and County Councils
Chief Executive, Office of the Planning Regulator
Chief Executive, An Coimisiún Pleanála
Directors of Service - Planning, City and County Councils
Directors, Regional Assemblies

CC: Senior Planners, City and County Councils
Deputy Regulator, Office of the Planning Regulator
Directors of Planning, An Coimisiún Pleanála
Assistant Directors, Regional Assemblies
Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
National Transport Authority

New legislation for development plans, area plans and housing strategies.

Commencement of Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 and Chapter 1 of Part 7 of the Planning and Development Act 2024

Purpose of Circular

This circular notifies local authorities and other key stakeholders of the commencement of Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 and Chapter 1 of Part 7 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act of 2024). A number of supplemental provisions are also being brought into operation.¹

By way of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Commencement) (No. 5) Order 2025 (S.I. No. 633 of 2025), these provisions come into operation on 31 December 2025. A copy

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of this circular, the Commencement Order and the associated Regulations will be made available online at www.gov.ie/planning.

1. Commencement of Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3, Chapter 1 of Part 7 and supplemental provisions

1.1. Key messages

- Following on from the commencement of Chapters 1 to 4 of Part 3 of the Act of 2024 on 02 October 2025, the remaining two Chapters of Part 3, Chapters 5 and 6, will come into operation on 31 December 2025. Chapter 5 provides for development plans and Chapter 6 provides for area plans (urban area plans, priority area plans and coordinated area plans).
- Chapter 1 of Part 7 also commences on 31 December 2025 and provides the new legislative basis for housing strategies.
- Chapters I and II of Part II of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Act of 2000) are repealed from 31 December 2025.
- The European Union (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 456/2025) and the Planning and Development (Prescribed Persons - Statutory Plans) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 458/2025) apply for the strategic environmental assessment of plans made under Part 3 of the Act of 2024 and prescribe bodies for consultation and notification purposes under that Part. See 'Planning and Development Act 2024 Commencement Circular No. 2025/05' for further information in relation to these Regulations.
- Section 35(1)(v) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2025 will be commenced from 31 December 2025 to ensure that references to development plans in the Act of 2000 include references to development plans under the Act of 2024 (further detail at item 1.3 below).

1.2. Summary of legislation coming into effect

1.2.1. *Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 (Plans, Policies and Related Matters)*

I. **Chapter 5 (Development Plans)** provides for the making of a development plan, including the following matters –

- establishes the obligation to make a development plan,
- sets out the content that must be included in a development plan,
- sets out the procedures for preparing, making and varying a development plan, and
- sets out the procedures for ensuring the alignment of the development plan with national and regional policy.

Development plans made under Chapter 5 will have a 10-year duration, rather than the 6-year lifespan under the Act of 2000. An interim review of a development plan will occur at Year 5 of the plan to ensure there is an effective alignment between the development plan and the Census, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant regional spatial and economic strategy. This is to provide for more up-to-date plans and to help provide greater certainty, including that there is sufficient zoned land available to align with the needs of the corresponding housing development strategy and economic development strategy.

The content of development plans will be more strategic in nature and will include an integrated overall strategy for the relevant functional area as well as six thematic strategies. The thematic strategies consolidate mandatory and discretionary objectives under the Act of 2000 to provide a coherent and focused framework for balanced regional development, the sustainable growth of urban areas, the vitality of rural areas, the protection and enhancement of the environment and natural and heritage assets and the incorporation of design standards.

Development plans are required to contain objectives specific to certain settlements, such as those with over 1,500 population, certain Gaeltacht areas and inhabited offshore islands. Zoning will be undertaken only in development plans to ensure greater coherence with the integrated overall strategy for the development of the city or county concerned and for the timely delivery of infrastructural development, including housing.

A new expedited procedure is introduced for the making of an amendment to a development plan to ensure consistency with a newly issued or amended National

Planning Statement. Chapter 5 will also empower the Minister to issue an urgent direction requiring an amendment to a development plan in certain circumstances.

The plan evaluation role of the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR) has been amended by the simplification and streamlining of the 'direction procedure' in respect of development plans, while the Minister remains the final decision-maker with respect to whether a direction is to issue, or not, in respect of a development plan.

II. **Chapter 6 (Urban Area Plans, Priority Area Plans and Coordinated Area Plans)**

replaces the provisions for Local Area Plans under the Act of 2000 with three new types of focused Area Plans.

The three types of Area Plans are:

- Urban Area Plans for regional growth centres and key towns that have been designated at regional level in the regional spatial and economic strategy and where, in the opinion of the planning authority, the scale of planned growth requires an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning for the entire urban area.
- Priority Area Plans for parts of towns and cities that have the capacity to deliver significant housing or other development or that have a particular need for a bespoke plan for regeneration and renewal.
- Coordinated Area Plans to be prepared jointly by two or more planning authorities for the development of a settlement, or part of an urban area of a settlement, that straddles their functional areas. Such a settlement or part of a settlement is to be identified in the regional spatial and economic strategy.

The process for the preparation and making of Area Plans replaces the process established for the preparation and making of Local Area Plans under Chapter II of Part II of the Act of 2000. Chapter 6 also provides an enhanced oversight role of the OPR in respect of Area Plans.

1.2.2. Chapter 1 of Part 7 (Housing Strategy and Supply)

Chapter 1 (Housing Strategy) provides for the preparation of housing strategies by planning authorities to ensure that adequate land is zoned for housing and that sufficient

social, affordable and cost rental housing is provided in their functional areas. It re-enacts, with some modifications, section 94 of the Act of 2000.

Section 242 provides that a housing strategy may be jointly prepared by two or more planning authorities in respect of the combined area of their development plans. The section also provides that up to 20% of land used for residential purposes (including land that is not zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses but in respect of which permission for the development of houses is granted) must be provided for social, affordable or cost rental housing. Population growth targets in the NPF must be taken into account by planning authorities when housing strategies are being prepared.

Section 242 contains a transitional provision to provide that the existing housing strategy under Part V of the Act of 2000 will continue to be the housing strategy of the planning authority until such time as a new development plan under Part 3 of the Act of 2024 is made.

Section 243 provides that, in certain circumstances, the chief executive of a planning authority shall make an estimate of the existing need and likely future need for housing for purchase by owner-occupiers and affordable and cost rental accommodation required for the relevant functional area. That estimate will be deemed to be included in the housing strategy concerned. This is a new provision to ensure that older housing strategies which do not meet the criteria set out in Chapter 1 of Part 7 are consistent with 'new' housing strategies.

1.2.3. Supplemental Provisions also being brought into operation

I. Part 12 - Miscellaneous Powers and Procedures:

- Section 390 - Consultants and advisers (in so far as not already in operation)
- Section 391 - Power of examination, investigation and survey
- Section 397 - Presumption of service of owner or occupier
- Section 398 - Failure to effect service
- Section 399 - Dispensation with service or giving of notice
- Section 400 - Public notification
- Section 401 - Recovery of moneys

II. Part 19 - Further Provisions Relating to Planning Bodies:

- Section 570 - Officers of planning authority
- Section 574 - Requirements as to beneficial interests (in so far as not already in operation)

- Section 575 - Prohibition on certain communications concerning Commission and planning authorities (in so far as not already in operation)
- Section 576 - Ministerial oversight of performance of functions by planning authorities and regional assemblies
- Section 577 - Appointment of commissioner to perform functions of planning authority
- Section 578 - Provisions relating to offences (in so far as not already in operation)

III. **Part 20 - Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions:**

- Section 580 - Charging of expenses of planning authority
- Section 581 - Apportionment of joint expenses of planning authorities
- Section 582 - Power to set off

1.3. Transitional provisions

Table 1 lists the transitional provisions in Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 and Chapter 1 of Part 7 of the Act of 2024 and the effect that those transitional provisions have.

Table 1: Transitional Provisions for Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 of the Act of 2024.

Provision	Section of Act of 2024	Section of Act of 2000	Effect
Plans, Policies and Related Matters (Chapter 5 and 6 of Part 3)			
Continuation in force of pre-commencement development plan	68	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A development plan made under section 12 of the Act of 2000 continues in force under the Act of 2024, notwithstanding the repeal of section 12 of the Act of 2000 by section 6 of the Act of 2024. • Such a development plan will remain in force for the remainder of its duration or until a new development plan is made under the Act of 2024. • The duration of such a development plan can be varied by way of Ministerial Order for the purposes of ensuring the effective operation of Part 3. • Where a provision of such a development plan conflicts with a provision of the NPF or the relevant RSES, the provision of the NPF or the RSES shall take precedence.

Notices under sections 11 or 13 of Act of 2000	69 ¹	11, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsection (1) of section 69 provides that the review of a development plan under section 11 of the Act of 2000 shall continue under that Act on and after the commencement of the repeal of Part II of the Act of 2000 (i.e. 02 October 2025). Subsection (2) of section 69 provides that the variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act of 2000 shall continue under that Act on and after the repeal of section 13 of the Act of 2000 (i.e. 31 December 2025).
Continuation in force of pre-commencement local area plans	81 ¹	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A local area plan made under section 20 of the Act of 2000 continues in force under the Act of 2024, notwithstanding the repeal of section 20 of the Act of 2000 by section 6 of the Act of 2024. References in the Act of 2024 (other than Parts 3 and 6 and Chapter 3 of Part 18) to urban area plans shall be construed as including references to local area plans. Such a local area plan will remain in force for the remainder of its duration or until a new development plan is made under the Act of 2024 in respect of the functional area to which the local area plan relates. The duration of such a local area plan may be varied by the members of the relevant planning authority for the purposes of ensuring the effective operation of Part 3. A planning authority may amend such a local area plan and notwithstanding their repeal, Parts II, XAB and Chapter III of Part IIB shall continue to have effect in relation to the local area plan. Where a provision of such a local area plan conflicts with a provision of the NPF, the relevant RSES or development plan, or National Planning Policies and Measures contained in a National Planning Statement, the provision of the NPF, RSES, development plan or National Planning Policies and Measures shall take precedence. Subsection (8) of section 81 provides that the making, amending or revocation of a local area plan under section 20 of the Act of 2000 shall continue under that Act on and after the repeal of section 20 of the Act of 2000 (i.e. 31 December 2025).

¹ Section 69(2) and section 81(8) were modified by the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Modification) Regulations 2025 (S.I. No. 611/2025) on 11 Dec 2025.

Housing Strategy (Chapter 1 of Part 7)			
Continuation in force of 'Part V' housing strategies	242(12)	94	A housing strategy made under Part V of the Act of 2000 shall remain in effect until the replacement of the relevant development plan in accordance with Part 3 of the Act of 2024.

Section 35 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2025 ensures that references to certain plans, strategies and guidelines in the Act of 2000 can be interpreted as including references to the corresponding plans, strategies and guidelines under the Act of 2024. As part of this phase of commencements, references to development plans in the Act of 2000 should be construed as references to development plans in the Act of 2024.

Table 2: Relevant Transitional Provisions in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2025

Provision	Section of Act of 2025	References in un-repealed provision of Act of 2000	Effect
Construction of references in Act of 2000	35(1)(v)	"development plan"	To be construed as including references to a "development plan" within the meaning of the Act of 2024.

2. Partial Repeal of the Act of 2000

The following table lists the provisions in the Act of 2000 that are repealed by way of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Commencement) (No. 5) Order 2025 (S.I. No. 633 of 2025).

Table 3: Repealed Provisions in the Act of 2000.

Act of 2000	Title
Chapter I of Part II	Development Plans
Chapter II of Part II	Local Area Plans
Part IIA (in so far as it is not already repealed)	DTA and Land Use Provisions
Chapter II of Part IIB (other than paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) and subsection (3) of section 31P) and sections 31T and 31AE)	Establishment, Organisation, Staffing etc.
Chapter IV of Part IIB	Review of Planning Functions
Section 94 (other than subsection (4)(a))	Housing strategies
Section 95	Housing strategies and development plans
Section 147	Declaration by members, etc. of certain interests
Section 148 (in so far as it is not already repealed)	Requirements affecting members, etc. who have certain beneficial interests.

Section 149	Supplemental provisions relating to sections 147 and 148.
Section 177R (paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) in definition of “land use plans”)	Interpretation (Part XAB)
Section 177S(2)(c), (d) and (e)	Competent Authority
Section 177T(3)(c) and (d)	Natura impact report and Natura impact statement
First Schedule	Purposes for which objectives may be indicated in Development Plan

In order to facilitate draft direction processes that are ongoing under section 31 of the Act of 2000, the following provisions of the Act of 2000 are being retained on a temporary basis until a corresponding transitional provision is provided for (by way of a future amendment to the Act of 2024) –

- Section 31;
- Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) and subsection (3) of section 31P;
- Section 31AE;
- Chapter III of Part IIB (in so far as it is not already repealed).

3. Consequential Amendments

Section 631 of the Act of 2024 (Consequential amendment of Acts of Oireachtas) and the corresponding Schedule 7 set out consequential amendments to numerous Acts of Oireachtas in order to update references to provisions of the Act of 2000, or regulations made under that Act, with references to the corresponding provisions of the Act of 2024.

Importantly, the amendments set out in Schedule 7 are only being brought into effect as required following the repeal of the relevant provisions in the Act of 2000. For the purposes of the commencement of Chapters 5 and 6 of Part 3 and Chapter 1 of Part 7 of the Act of 2024, and the corresponding repeals in the Act of 2000, the following Acts are being amended -

- National Monuments Act 1930 (No. 2 of 1930)
- Roads Act 1993 (No. 14 of 1993)
- Harbours Act 1996 (No.11 of 1996)
- Local Government Act 2001 (No. 37 of 2001)
- Civil Registration Act 2004 (No. 3 of 2004)
- Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 (No. 22 of 2009)
- Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009 (No. 27 of 2009)
- National Asset Management Agency Act 2009 (No. 34 of 2009)
- Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (No. 50 of 2013)

- Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 (No. 5 of 2015)
- Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (No. 33 of 2015)
- Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 (No. 17 of 2016)
- Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 (No. 24 of 2019)
- Land Development Agency Act 2021 (No. 26 of 2021)
- Water Environment (Abstractions and Associated Impoundments) Act 2022 (No. 48 of 2022)
- Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (No. 26 of 2023)

4. Commencement schedule for remaining Parts of the Act of 2024

Part 18 of the Act of 2024 is being brought into operation alongside the commencement of Chapter 5 and 6 of Parts 3 and Chapter 1 of Part 7. Please see 'Planning and Development Act 2024 Commencement Circular No. 2025/07' for further information in relation to the commencement of Part 18.

It is anticipated that the following elements of the Act of 2024 will be brought into operation in the next phase of commencements:

- Event Licensing (Part 16);
- Development Consents (Part 4) and associated provisions (such as Parts 2, 5, Chapters 3 and 4 of Part 6, Chapter 2 of Part 7, Part 8 and Part 10)
- Urban Development Zones (Chapters 3 to 6 of Part 22);

Details of the proposed phased commencement of the Act of 2024 are set out under Chapter 10 of the Implementation Plan available to view at www.gov.ie/planning

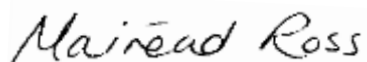
5. Further information

A dedicated website for the Act of 2024 has been launched to provide updates, further information and useful resources. The website can be accessed at www.gov.ie/planning and includes a webpage summarising Commencements Orders and the provisions of the Act of 2024 that are already in operation (available to view [here](#)).

The Law Reform Commission has prepared a revised version of the Act of 2024 (as amended by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2025) which is available to view [here](#). The Law Reform Commission also continues to maintain a revised Planning and Development Act 2000 which incorporates repeals made as part of the phased commencement of the Act of 2024 (available [here](#)).

Any enquiries regarding this circular or the commencement of the Act of 2024 can be emailed to the Department at planningreform@housing.gov.ie.

Issued by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mairéad Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mairéad Ross, Principal Officer, Planning Legislation Reform Unit