



**An Bille um Athbheochan Uirbeach agus
Tithe (Leasú), 2017**
**Urban Regeneration and Housing (Amendment) Bill
2017**

Meabhrán Mínitheach
Explanatory Memorandum



**AN BILLE UM ATHBHEOCHAN UIRBEACH AGUS
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URBAN REGENERATION AND HOUSING (AMENDMENT)
BILL 2017**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill amends the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. It has four main purposes:

- (i) to ensure that the vacant site levy is applied to all lands that can potentially accommodate housing development within existing development standards,
- (ii) to ensure that the rate of the vacant site levy is increased the longer the site remains vacant,
- (iii) to remove the exemptions and lower rates of levy applying to sites with outstanding loans in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015.
- (iv) to require the zoning and area of each site to be published on the Vacant Site Register

Section 1 deals with Interpretation.

Section 2 amends section 5 of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 so that no minimum area threshold would apply to a vacant site.

The current Act sets a limit of 0.05 hectares, meaning the levy cannot be applied to vacant sites smaller than this. This excludes many sites that could readily accommodate residential units. The new provision would allow the levy to be applied to sites of any area that, in the opinion of the planning authority, could accommodate housing units and still meet development standards.

Section 3 amends section 8 of the Principal Act to require planning authorities to publish the area and zoning of each site entered on the Vacant Site Register.

Section 4 amends section 16 of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. It addresses two aspects of the rate of levy payable:

- (i) it provides for the vacant site levy to be increased by 1 percentage point for every full year that the site remains on the register. The purpose of this provision is to deal with the prospect that the 3 per cent levy currently contained in legislation may well be lower than the rate of inflation in the cost of land.
- (ii) it provides for a repeal of subsection (2) and (3) of section 16 of the Principal Act. These provisions currently set down lower or zero rate levies depending on the size of the outstanding loans

on the site. Repeal of these subsections will prevent deliberate manipulation of the provisions of the Principal Act, will encourage the release of more land for development, and will help local authorities deal with problematic sites.

*Deputies Catherine Murphy and Róisín Shortall,
Bealtaine, 2017.*