



An Bille Rialtais Áitiúil (Cathracha), 2026
Local Government (Cities) Bill 2026

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Explanatory Memorandum



**AN BILLE RIALTAIS ÁITIÚIL (CATHRACHA), 2026
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Purpose of the Bill

The purpose of the Local Government (Cities) Bill 2026 is to provide for the municipal district area that includes the Local Electoral Area of Drogheda Urban to be known, in the Irish language, as Ceantar Bardasach Chathair and in the English language as the Municipal District of Drogheda City, to provide that specified classes of towns (which satisfy the requirements provided for by the Bill) may be granted city status and to provide for related matters.

The Minister for the purposes of the Local Government Acts 1925 to 2024 is the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Provisions of the Bill

Section 1 (definitions) is a standard form provision that provides for the defining of certain terms used in the Bill.

Section 2 (Drogheda City)

Subsection (1) amends section 22A (inserted by the Local Government (Reform) Act 2014) of the Local Government Act 2001 which will have the effect that the municipal district area that contains the Local Electoral Area of Drogheda Urban is to be known as the Municipal District of Drogheda City.

Subsection (2) provides that certain references to the municipal district which contains the Local Electoral area of Drogheda Urban shall, where the context admits, be read as a reference to the municipal district of Drogheda City.

Section 3 (amendments consequential to section 2) provides amendments to the Local Government Act 2014 which are set out in the Schedule and are consequential to section 2.

Section 4 (granting of city status) inserts a new section 10A into the Local Government Act 2001 so as to provide a procedure by which city status may be conferred on a town that satisfies certain specified criteria.

Section 10A

Subsection (1) of section 10A provides for definitions, including those for “specified town” and “urban centre” (see below).

Subsection (2) of section 10A provides that the section does not apply to the areas of existing cities, the proposed Drogheda City (see section 2) or to any town where city status has been granted to it under that section. In effect, this also means that city status

cannot be granted under section 10A to an area forming part of an existing city.

Subsection (3) of section 10A provides that subsection (2) is not to be read as affecting the exercise ministerial function to amend local government boundaries.

In essence, section 10A would provide that for that section to apply—

- the town concerned—
 - must consist of or be within an urban centre,
 - has to consist of coterminous “electoral divisions” (defined in subsection (1)) within a common boundary that together form part of one or more than one “local electoral area” (see section 23 of Local Government Act 2001 as amended), and
 - has to have at least 50 percent of the population of the urban centre living within the specified town;
- the urban centre (within which the specified town is situated or consists of)—
 - has to be within one or more municipal district of a county council or city and county council or, in the case of the administrative area Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Fingal County or South Dublin, within one or more than one area committee established under section 50 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended;
 - has to have a resident population of at least 45,000 with a population density of not less than 1,500 persons per square kilometre, and
 - have a civic office or other administrative centre primarily for the provision of local government administrative services to the urban centre concerned.

Subsections (4) to (9) of section 10A provide for the procedural steps to be taken for the purpose of seeking to acquire city status, including consideration of materials sent to the Minister for the purpose of that section, the decision by the Minister and matters consequential to that decision.

Subsection (4) of section 10A provides that if at least two-thirds of the members representing a specified town (as defined) vote in favour of that town being given city status, then they may petition their county council or city and county council, as the case may be) accordingly.

Subsection (5) of section 10A provides that the Chief Executive of the county council or city and county council, as the case may be, shall examine the petition.

Subsection (6) of section 10A provides that if the Chief Executive of the Council is satisfied that the petition complies with the requirements for petitioning the Council, then the Chief Executive shall report accordingly to the council.

Subsection (7) of section 10A provides that if at a meeting of the Council a majority of the members of the Council present and voting pass a resolution supporting the petition seeking city status for the town concerned, then its Chief Executive shall

send the Minister (the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government) duly certified copies of the documents referred to in that subsection together with such other information as the Minister may prescribe (that is, prescribed by the Minister under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2001).

Subsection (8) of section 10A provides that the Minister, after consideration of the materials sent in accordance with subsection (7) and after any making such enquiries the as Minister considers appropriate, shall make a decision to either grant city status under subsection (9) or not make such an order. Subsection (8) also provides for reasons to be given to the Council by the Minister where city status is not to be conferred or for timelines for the making the ministerial order granting city status.

Subsection (9) of section 10A provides for the making of the order conferring city status and for consequential provisions.

Subsection (10) of section 10A provides that the Minister may by regulations prescribe such matters as the Minister considers appropriate to enable this section to have full force and effect.

Section 5 (short title, commencement and collective citation) contains standard provisions of a general nature dealing with the short title, commencement and collective citation.

Schedule (Drogheda City and consequential amendments to Principal Act)

The amendments in the Schedule are for the purpose of giving effect to section 2(1). For the most part they mirror the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014) in so far as that Act specifically relates to Kilkenny City. In particular, attention is drawn to the following Reference numbers in the Schedule:

Reference No. 2 (paragraph (c) inserted after paragraph (b) of section 10(6)). Section 10 (as amended) of the Local Government Act 2001 relates to local government areas and subsection (6) provides that section is without prejudice to the continued use of description of city to Kilkenny (paragraph (a)) and to Limerick and Waterford (paragraph (b)). Paragraph (c) proposes that that section is also without prejudice to the use of the description of city to Drogheda as proposed to be provided for by section 22A of that Act as amended by this Bill.

Reference No. 5 (amendment to section 22A (municipal districts) of the Local Government Act 2001). This proposed subsection (2A) to that section is a consequential amendment to the amendment provided for in section 2 of the Bill. That subsection provides that nothing in the amendment provided for in section 2 of the Bill (inserting a paragraph (d) into section 22A) prevents the Minister from amending the municipal district that includes for the time being Drogheda City. Where such amendment to that district is so made then subsection (2A) provides for the area to which the use of “Drogheda City” is to apply.

Reference No. 8 (amendment of subsection (1A) of section 32 (alternative titles to Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach, etc.) The insertion of paragraph (ba) after paragraph (b) of subsection (1A) in effect confirms the continuing use of the titles of “Mayor” and “Deputy Mayor” in respect of Drogheda City.

Joanna Byrne, TD,
Aibreán, 2026.