
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (ROTUNDA HOSPITAL) BILL 2026

Section

1. Interpretation
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ACT REFERRED TO

Planning and Development Act 2000 (No. 30)

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (ROTUNDA HOSPITAL) BILL 2026

Bill

entitled

An Act to enable the re-opening of a certain decision of An Coimisiún Pleanála, and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows:

Interpretation

1. In this Act –

“the Commission” means An Coimisiún Pleanála;

“the decision” means the decision made on 31 July 2025 by Dublin City Council to grant, subject to conditions, permission for a development proposed by the hospital for its campus at Parnell Square in the City of Dublin;

“the hospital” means the Governors and Guardians of the Hospital for the Relief of Poor Lying-In Women, Dublin, commonly called the Rotunda Hospital;

“the order” means the order made by the Commission dated 9 February 2026 and bearing the reference number ACP-323482-25 in an appeal against the decision, which order refused permission for the proposed development;

“the referenced policy” means the policy of the Government set out in the National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026 and referenced in the order, to the effect that all maternity hospitals in the State would be co-located with an adult acute hospital in the medium term and, in particular, that funding under the Government’s six year capital investment framework, *Building on Recovery 2016-2021*, would enable a maternity capital programme towards the later years of the plan that included the relocation of the hospital to a site on the Connolly Hospital campus in Blanchardstown.

Statement of Government policy on Rotunda Hospital relocation

2. (1) The Government shall, within 3 months of the passing of this Act, prepare and publish a statement under this section specifying, so far as the hospital and its future location are concerned –

- (a) having regard in particular to the elapse of time since its publication, whether or to what extent the referenced policy remains the policy of the Government,
- (b) if relocation of the hospital remains a policy objective, whether –
 - (i) such a project has been the subject of any recent strategic assessment or preliminary studies,
 - (ii) there is an indicative or a costed budget for the project,
 - (ii) there is an expected timetable for commencement and completion of the project,
- (c) if the referenced policy is no longer the policy of the Government, clarifying its policy in relation to the future location of the hospital.

(2) The statement made under this section shall, as soon as may be –

- (a) be laid by the Government before both Houses of the Oireachtas, and
- (b) be sent by the Government to the Commission.

Effect of statement

3. (1) When the statement made under *section 2* is received by it, the Commission –

- (a) shall consider the statement, and
- (b) notwithstanding any other enactment or rule of law, may decide to re-open and reconsider the appeal against the decision.

(2) In deciding whether to re-open and reconsider the appeal against the decision, the Commission shall consider –

- (a) whether the statement is materially different to the referenced policy,
- (b) if relocation of the hospital remains a policy objective, whether the weight to be given to –
 - (i) the adverse impact caused by the proposed development,
 - (ii) the relocation of the hospital at the end of the expected timetable (if there is one), and
 - (iii) the public benefit, including in particular for mothers and babies, provided by the proposed development in the intervening period,

ought to be re-examined by the Commission,

(c) the desirability that in the performance of planning functions regard should be had, where relevant, to statements of policy that are kept up-to-date and correct, and

(d) such other matters as it considers proper and relevant.

(3) If the Commission decides to re-open and reconsider the appeal against the decision –

(a) the statement shall be deemed to be a submission requested of the Government by the Commission under section 131 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and

(b) the Commission, having had regard to the statement and having considered all other submissions or observations or documents, particulars or other information submitted to it, shall determine the appeal in accordance with that Act.

Short title

4. This Act may be cited as the Planning and Development (Rotunda Hospital) Act 2026.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (ROTUNDA HOSPITAL) BILL 2026

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of Bill

On 31 July 2025 Dublin City Council decided to grant, subject to conditions, planning permission for a four-storey over basement maternity hospital extension that was proposed for the Rotunda Hospital campus at Parnell Square in Dublin. Parnell Square is designated a Georgian Conservation Area in the Dublin City Development Plan and is lined by a number of protected structures.

In an appeal against that decision to An Comisiún Pleanála (“the Commission”), the Commission placed reliance on stated Government policy that the Rotunda Hospital would move to a co-located setting with an acute hospital. In the Commission’s view, the hospital would be co-located elsewhere in the medium to longer term, by which time the adverse impact caused by the proposed development to the character and setting of protected structures and the Georgian Conservation Area could not be undone. In those circumstances, the Commission did not agree with its Inspector’s conclusion that the proposal represented an overwhelming public benefit sufficient to justify the degree of heritage harm identified.

The purpose of this Bill is to enable the Government to clarify its policy and, in particular, whether the co-location of the Rotunda Hospital still represents Government policy, or if it is intended that the hospital should remain in Parnell Square for the foreseeable future.

If the Government does so, then the appeal before An Comisiún Pleanála is re-opened and the Commission will hear and determine the appeal having had regard to an updated statement of policy.

Provisions of Bill

Section 1 sets out some definitions relating to the Rotunda Hospital, the original planning decision of Dublin City Council and the order in the appeal against that decision made by the Commission.

The section also defines “the referenced policy” meaning the policy of the Government set out in the National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026 and referenced in the Commission’s order, to the effect that all maternity hospitals in the State would be co-located with an adult acute hospital in the medium term and, in particular, that funding under the Government’s six year capital investment framework, *Building on Recovery 2016-2021*, would enable a maternity capital programme towards the later years of the plan that included the relocation of the Rotunda Hospital to a site on the Connolly Hospital campus in Blanchardstown.

Section 2 provides that, the Government must, within 3 months of the passing of this Bill into law, prepare and publish a statement specifying, so far as the Rotunda and its future location are concerned –

- whether or to what extent the National Maternity Strategy remains the policy of the Government,
- if relocation of the Rotunda remains a policy objective, whether such a project has been the subject of any recent strategic assessment or preliminary studies, whether there is an indicative or a costed budget for the project, and whether there is an expected timetable for commencement and completion of the project,
- if the National Maternity Strategy is no longer the policy of the Government, clarifying its policy in relation to the future location of the Rotunda.

The statement must be laid by the Government before both Houses of the Oireachtas and be sent to the Commission.

Section 3 provides that, when the statement made under section 2 is received by it, the Commission must consider the statement and may then in its discretion decide, notwithstanding any other enactment or rule of law, to re-open and reconsider the appeal against the decision. In deciding whether or not to do so, the Commission must consider whether the statement is materially different to the original referenced policy. If it stated that relocation of the hospital remains a policy objective, the Commission shall consider whether to re-examine the weight to be given to –

- the adverse impact caused by the proposed development,
- the relocation of the hospital at the end of the expected timetable, and
- the public benefit, including in particular for mothers and babies, provided by the proposed development in the intervening period.

It must also consider the desirability that in the performance of planning functions regard should be had, where relevant, to statements of policy and objectives that are kept up-to-date and correct, and such other matters as it considers proper and relevant.

If the Commission decides to re-open and reconsider the appeal against the decision, then the Government statement is deemed to be a submission requested of the Government by the Commission under section 131 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Commission shall then have regard to the statement as well as to all the other submissions or observations or documents, particulars or other information submitted to it, and shall determine the appeal in accordance with that Act.

Section 4 provides for the short title of the Bill.

Marie Sherlock TD
February 2026