

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



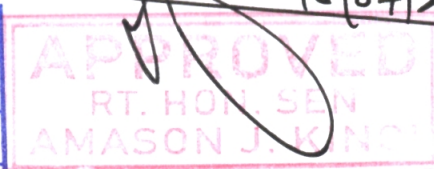
② Hon. Speaker
You may approve for
tabling. MA
15/7/26

13TH PARLIAMENT | 4TH SENATE | 5TH SESSION

STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEVOLUTION AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

REPORT ON THE APPLICATION FOR CONFERMENT OF CITY
STATUS TO THIKA MUNICIPALITY

PAPERS LAID	
DATE	15/7/26
TABLED BY	Chairperson
COMMITTEE	Devolution
CLERK AT THE TABLE	Belinda



15/07/26
Clerk
Forwarded and recommended
for approval for tabling
15/07/2026

Clerk's Chambers,
The Senate,
First Floor, Parliament Buildings,
NAIROBI.

JULY, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS	iii
PRELIMINARIES.....	v
Mandate of the Committee.....	v
Membership of the Committee	v
CHAIRPERSON’S FOREWORD	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Legal Framework	1
CHAPTER TWO: Conduct of Inquiry and Stakeholder Submissions.....	4
2.0 Conduct of Inquiry	4
2.1 Summary of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on conferment of city status.....	7
2.2 Submissions from the County Government of Kiambu.....	19
2.3 Submissions from The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)	36
2.4 Submissions from The Office of the Auditor General (OAG).....	37
2.5 Submissions from the National Lands Commission (NLC)	38
2.6 Submissions from The Thika Residents Association.....	39
2.7 Submissions from Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-Operative Society Ltd.....	40
2.8 Submissions from the Thika Small Traders Association	40
2.9 Submissions from Public Participation.....	41
2.10 Inspection of the Municipality’s key facilities and Amenities.....	44
CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE URBAN AREAS AND CITIES ACT	50
3.1 Compliance with the procedural requirements under section 8.....	50
3.2 Compliance with the substantive criteria under section 5	51
CHAPTER FOUR: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.....	63
CHAPTER FIVE: COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	64
PICTORIALS.....	65
ANNEXURES.....	70

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AMREF	-	AMREF Health Africa
CBD	-	Central Business District
CEC	-	County Executive Committee
CIDP	-	County Integrated Development Plan
DANIDA	-	Danish International Development Agency
ECDE	-	Early Childhood Development Education
ERP	-	Enterprise Resource Planning System
GIS	-	Geographic Information System
IoT	-	Internet of Things (used to describe Smart-Enabled waste bins)
ISUDP	-	Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan
IUDP	-	Integrated Urban Development Plan
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JKIA	-	Jomo Kenyatta International Airport
JKUAT	-	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
KEMRI	-	Kenya Medical Research Institute
KEPSA	-	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KIRDI	-	Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute
KISIP	-	Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Programme
KNBS	-	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

KUMIP	-	Kenya Urban Mobility Improvement Project
KURA	-	Kenya Urban Roads Authority
KUSP	-	Kenya Urban Support Programme
NACADA	-	National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol & Drug Abuse
NAMSIP	-	Nairobi Metropolitan Service Improvement Programme
NICU	-	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NLC	-	National Land Commission
NSP	-	National Spatial Plan
OAG	-	Office of the Auditor General
OSR	-	Own Source Revenue
THIWASCO	-	Thika Water and Sewerage Company
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
USSD	-	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
WASREB	-	Water Services Regulatory Board
WENRECC	-	Thika's Department of Water, Environment, Natural Resources, Energy and Climate Change
WHO	-	World Health Organization

PRELIMINARIES

Mandate of the Committee

The Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations is established under Standing Order 228 (3) and the Fourth Schedule of the Senate Standing Orders. The Committee is mandated to “*consider all matters relating to devolution, intergovernmental and inter-county relations, governance and management of county governments, cities, towns and urban areas.*”

Membership of the Committee

1. Sen. Sheikh Mohamed Abass, CBS, MP	-	Chairperson
2. Sen. Catherine Muyeka Mumma, CBS, MP	-	Vice Chairperson
3. Sen. (Prof.) Margaret Kamar, EGH, MP	-	Member
4. Sen. (Dr.) Oburu Oginga, MGH, MP	-	Member
5. Sen. Peris Pesi Tobiko, CBS, MP	-	Member
6. Sen. Paul Karungo Thangwa, CBS, MP	-	Member
7. Sen. Richard Momoima Onyonka, EBS, MP	-	Member
8. Sen. Mohamed Said Chute, CBS, MP	-	Member
9. Sen. Hezena M. Lemaletian, MP	-	Member

The Minutes of the Committee sittings in considering the Application for conferment of city status to Thika Municipality are attached to this Report collectively as ***Annex 1***.

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Mr. Speaker,

The Clerk of the County Assembly of Kiambu conveyed to the Clerk of the Senate, the Resolution of the County Assembly to adopt the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee recommending the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, vide a letter dated 24th June, 2025 and referenced, *CAK/1/19/10 Vol 2(10)*.

Along with the letter transmitting the resolution of the County Assembly, the County Government of Kiambu forwarded the following reports;

- (a) the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee constituted to consider and make recommendations on the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality; and
- (b) the Report of the County Assembly Committee on County Planning and urbanization on its consideration and approval of the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee.

At its Sitting held on Tuesday 15th July, 2025, the Speaker of the Senate issued a communication by way of a Message to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 48 (3) of the Senate Standing Orders, transmitting the resolution of the County Assembly of Kiambu to confer the status of a city to Thika Municipality. The Speaker then referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations for consideration.

Mr. Speaker,

The Committee considered the provisions of the Urban Areas and Cities Act Cap 275 that guide the application for conferment of city status to a municipality, and analyzed the reports submitted by the County Government of Kiambu, to ascertain compliance with the provisions of the Act

The Committee invited the County Government of Kiambu to make oral submissions and to provide any additional information on the application for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality. The Governor of Kiambu County accompanied by the Thika Municipal Board and the Ad Hoc Committee on the application for conferment of city status, appeared before the committee on Thursday, 7th August, 2025.

The Committee also wrote to the Office of the Auditor General to confirm the total revenue generated by Thika Municipality from the Financial Year 2018/2019 to Financial Year 2024/2025. The Committee also wrote to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to confirm the total population of the Municipality. The Committee further wrote to the following stakeholders to seek their views on the matter; The National Lands Commission (NLC); The Thika Residents Association; Thika Small Traders Association; and Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-Operative Society Ltd.

Mr. Speaker,

In addition to the afore-mentioned activities, in accordance with Article 118 of the Constitution, the Committee published an advertisement in the Standard Newspaper on 13th March, 2026, inviting members of the public to submit any representations they may have on the matter by way of memoranda. The Committee further invited members of the public to a public hearing that was held on Wednesday, 8th April, 2026 at Mount Kenya University Graduation Pavilion in Thika.

A detailed matrix of all submissions, including concerns raised and recommendations made, is annexed to the report as Annex 4.

The Committee also conducted a guided inspection of the various amenities and services provided by the Municipality to ascertain compliance with the requirements of the First Schedule of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275. The establishments inspected included; Gatitu Road; Rosary Early Childhood Development Education Centre (ECDE); the Kiambu County Level 5 Hospital; the Thika Stadium; the Mama Ngina Peoples' Park; Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO); and Thika Fire Station.

Additionally, the committee benefited from a comparative analysis of similarly positioned twin cities across other jurisdictions, taking into account Thika's position within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region.

Mr. Speaker,

Following the conclusion of these activities, the Committee subjected the Application for the Conferment of city status to Thika Municipality to the procedural requirements under Section 8 and the substantive criteria for the classification of an urban area as a city under Section 5(1) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275.

From the foregoing, the Committee finds that Thika Municipality has complied with the procedural requirements under Section 8 of the Act, and meets the substantive criteria for conferment of city status set out under Section 5(1) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275. The Committee observes that the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality will provide an important platform for accelerated development, improved service delivery, and enhanced local economic growth. planning. (detailed observations of the Committee are captured under Chapter Three and Chapter Four of the Report)

The Committee therefore makes the following **recommendations** –

- (a) **THAT**, the Senate approves the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, and the resolution of the Senate be transmitted to the President for the issuance of a Charter pursuant to section 7 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275.

- (b) **THAT**, noting the undertakings given by the County Government of Kiambu in the course of the Committee's inquiry to fully operationalise the facilities and services within the proposed City, the Governor of Kiambu County submits to the Senate, within ninety (90) days of the conferment of city status, workplans for the following—

- (i) the full operationalisation of the public theatre and the museum or interpretive centre;
- (ii) the enhancement of infrastructure and services within the residential estates, including road networks, drainage systems, flood mitigation, water supply coverage, and solid waste management, in line with the matters raised by residents during the public participation process; and
- (iii) the transition to a Smart Waste Management framework, including the full operationalisation of the Kang'oki sanitary engineered landfill.

Mr. Speaker,

May I take this opportunity to commend the Members of the Committee for their diligence and commitment to duty throughout the consideration of this application.

I also wish to thank the Offices of the Speaker and the Clerk of the Senate for the support extended to the Committee in undertaking this important assignment. Lastly, I wish to thank the Governor of Kiambu County, H.E Hon. (Dr.) Kimani Wamatangi, EGH, who engaged the Committee at various stages and presented submissions on behalf of the County Government, as well as all stakeholders and members of the public who took the time to engage with the Committee and share their views on this matter.

Mr. Speaker,

It is now my pleasant duty, pursuant to Standing Order 228 (4)(a), to present the report of the Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations on its consideration of the Application for conferment of City status to Thika Municipality.

Signed



Date.....

14.07.26

SEN. SHEIKH MOHAMED ABASS, CBS, MP

CHAIRPERSON,

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEVOLUTION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

2. By a letter dated 24th June, 2025 and referenced, *CAK/1/19/10 Vol 2(10)*, the Clerk of the County Assembly of Kiambu conveyed to the Clerk of the Senate, the Resolution of the County Assembly to adopt the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee recommending the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality.
3. Along with the letter transmitting the resolution of the County Assembly, the County Government of Kiambu forwarded the following reports;
 - (c) the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee constituted to consider and make recommendations on the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality; and
 - (d) the Report of the County Assembly Committee on County Planning and urbanization on its consideration and approval of the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee.
4. At its Sitting held on Tuesday 15th July, 2025, the Speaker of the Senate issued a communication by way of a Message to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 48 (3) of the Senate Standing Orders, transmitting the resolution of the County Assembly of Kiambu to confer the status of a city to Thika Municipality. The Speaker then referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations for consideration.

1.2 Legal Framework

The Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275

5. The Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275 was enacted to give effect to Article 184 of the Constitution, and establishes a legal framework that:
 - a) provides for the classification, governance and management of urban areas and cities;

- b) provides for the criteria of establishing urban area; and
 - c) provides for the principle of governance and participation of residents.
6. **Section 4** provides for the general classification of urban areas and cities and provides that an area may be classified as an urban area or city if it satisfies the criteria set out under this Act or any other written law.
7. **Section 5** provides the criteria for classifying an urban area as city as follows—
- a) has a population of at least two hundred and fifty thousand residents according to the final gazetted results of the last population census carried out by an institution authorized under any written law, preceding the application for grant of city status;
 - b) has an integrated urban area or city development plan in accordance with this Act and other existing laws;
 - c) has demonstrable capacity to generate sufficient revenue to sustain its operation;
 - d) has demonstrable good system and records of prudent management;
 - e) has the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver its services to its residents and has in existence, the services provided in the First Schedule;
 - f) has institutionalised active participation by its residents in the management of its affairs;
 - g) has infrastructural facilities, including but not limited to roads, street lighting, markets and fire stations, and an adequate capacity for disaster management; and
 - h) has a capacity for functional and effective waste disposal.
8. **Section 7** provides that the President may, upon a resolution of the Senate, confer city status on a municipality meeting the criteria under Section 5, by granting a charter in the prescribed form.
9. **Section 8** outlines the procedural steps for conferment as follows:
- a) The municipal board applies to the county executive committee via a resolution.
 - b) Upon approval, the county governor constitutes an ad hoc committee of professionals from specified institutions (e.g., Institution of Surveyors of Kenya,

Law Society of Kenya), ensuring regional, ethnic, gender diversity, and representation of persons with disabilities.

- c) The ad hoc committee assesses compliance with Section 5 criteria and advises the governor.
- d) If compliant, the governor transmits the recommendation to the county assembly for approval.
- e) Upon county assembly approval, the clerk transmits the resolution to the Senate for consideration.
- f) If the Senate approves, the clerk forwards the resolution to the President for conferment.

CHAPTER TWO: Conduct of Inquiry and Stakeholder Submissions

2.0 Conduct of Inquiry

10. On 21st July, 2025, the Committee considered a preliminary brief on the application for conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, highlighting the relevant provisions of the Urban Areas and Cities Act Cap 275, that guide on the criteria for conferment of a municipality to city status.
11. Subsequently, on Thursday, 31st July, 2025, the Committee considered two additional briefs including –
 - (i) An in-depth analysis of the submitted reports by the County Government of Kiambu, to ascertain compliance with the provisions of the Act; and
 - (ii) A comparative analysis of similarly positioned twin cities across other jurisdictions, taking into account Thika's position within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region.
12. Based on the analysis of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Report of the County Assembly Committee on County Planning and Urbanization, the Committee made the following observations in relation to the documents submitted by the Clerk of the County Assembly of Kiambu including the Ad Hoc Committee Report and the County Assembly's Committee Report:
 - (i) Integrated Urban Development Plan (Section 5(1)(b)): The Ad Hoc Committee Report referenced Thika's Integrated Urban Development Plan but it had not been annexed to the document.
 - (ii) Revenue Capacity (Section 5(1)(c)): The Ad Hoc Committee report referred to partial financial data for FY2022/2023 and the absence of detailed own-source revenue breakdowns limited the full assessment of compliance.
 - (iii) Prudent Management (Section 5(1)(d)): This criterion had not been addressed in the Ad hoc Committee report.
 - (iv) Under the First Schedule Services (Section 5(1)(e)): the Ad Hoc Committee report noted that the following services were not being offered by Thika

Municipality: the airport/airstrip, theatre, and museum. The report did not give specific indications on the timelines within which these services would be offered.

(v) Active resident participation (Section 5(1)(f)): the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee did not give information of mapped representative groups within the urban area, nor information on any capacity development initiatives on urban development matters that would help determine compliance with this criterion.

13. The Committee noted the need to undertake physical inspections, public participation, and stakeholder consultations, as undertaken in the conferment of city status to Eldoret (2023) and Nakuru (2021), to confirm the existence and efficiency of services as provided for under the First Schedule.
14. From the comparative analysis using the example of Minnesota, South Africa, and the Philippines, the Committee observed that in these jurisdictions, effective coordination mechanisms have been established to manage metropolitan regions where cities operate independently but are functionally interconnected. This further highlighted the need to have a comprehensive framework to coordinate metropolitan services in Kenya.
15. Upon extensive deliberations, the Committee resolved to invite the County Government of Kiambu to make oral submissions and to provide any additional information on the application for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality.
16. Consequently, the Governor of Kiambu County accompanied by the Thika Municipal Board and the Ad Hoc Committee on the application for conferment of city status, appeared before the committee on Thursday, 7th August, 2025.
17. The Committee also resolved to write to the Office of the Auditor General to confirm the total revenue generated by Thika Municipality from the Financial Year

2018/2019 to Financial Year 2024/2025, and write to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to confirm the total population of the Municipality.

18. The Committee further wrote to specific stakeholders to seek their views on the matter including;
 - (i) The National Lands Commission (NLC)
 - (ii) The Thika Residents Association
 - (iii) Thika Small Traders Association; and
 - (iv) Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-Operative Society Ltd
19. In accordance with Article 118 of the Constitution, the Committee published an advertisement in the Standard Newspaper on 13th March, 2026, inviting members of the public to submit any representations they may have on the matter by way of memoranda. The Committee further invited members of the public to a public hearing to be held on Wednesday 8th April, 2026 at Mount Kenya University Graduation Pavilion. Consequently, the public hearing was conducted on the scheduled date and venue where the Committee received various views from the public. (*Annex 4*)
20. Following their resolution and guided by the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, the Committee toured the Municipality, inspecting the facilities and services provided to ascertain compliance with Section 5 and the First Schedule of the Act. The Committee conducted inspection of the following;
 - (i) Rosary Early Childhood Development Education Centre
 - (ii) Kiambu County Level 5 Hospital
 - (iii) The Thika Stadium
 - (iv) Mama Ngina Peoples' Park
 - (v) Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO)
 - (vi) Thika Fire Station

2.1 Summary of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on conferment of city status

21. The County Government of Kiambu submitted the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee constituted to consider and make recommendations on the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality; and the Report of the County Assembly Committee on County Planning and urbanization on its consideration and approval of the report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee. The report is attached herein as **Annex 2**.
22. The Findings of the AdHoc Committee against each criterion are summarized as follows;

Criteria 1: Population Threshold for the Thika Municipality

23. The Ad Hoc Committee Report states that, under the Urban Areas and Cities Act, an urban area is eligible for conferment of a city status if the area satisfies criteria of a population of at least two hundred and fifty thousand residents (250,000) residents based on the final report gazetted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS).
24. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, carried out by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the total population of Thika Municipality was recorded at 279,429 persons. Using a growth rate of 3.4 percent per annum as stipulated in the National Spatial Plan (NSP), the Ad Hoc Committee projected Thika Municipality's population to reach 482,919 by 2035 and 808,434 by 2039.

Criteria 2: Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan (ISUDPS) for Thika Municipality

25. Section 5(1)(b) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act requires that an urban area seeking city status must have an Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) prepared in accordance with the Act and other relevant laws.
26. The Ad Hoc Committee report cites Section 56 of the Physical and Land Use Planning Act, which mandates county governments to control land and building

development and to approve development applications, as well as the County Governments Act, 2012, which obliges county governments to prepare plans before public funds may be issued for development. It further noted that the Urban Areas and Cities Act requires every city, municipality, and town to operate within the framework of an integrated development plan, which shall bind, guide, and inform all planning, development, and investment decisions for a period of ten years. The Ad Hoc Committee reported that Thika Municipality's Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan (ISUDP) had already been approved by the County Executive Committee and the County Assembly of Kiambu.

Criteria 3: Revenue Potential, Expenditure and Budget

27. The Ad Hoc Committee Report identified Thika Municipality's revenue streams as including local taxes namely land rates, business permits and licences, pollution, waste and environment charges, and parking and transport fees, as well as the county equitable share. The cumulative revenue and expenditure data reported for FY 2018/2019 to FY 2022/2023, together with projections for FY 2024/2025, are set out below.

Table 1: Revenue potential and expenditure

Financial Year	Own Revenue collected (Ksh)	Equalisation Fund (Ksh)	Total Revenue (Ksh)	Total Expenditure (Ksh)
FY 2018/2019	876,714,638	477,400,000	1,354,114,638	1,352,940,248
FY 2019/2020	728,477,905	557,846,832	1,286,324,737	1,285,214,737
FY 2020/2021	796,763,810	554,396,000	1,351,159,810	1,350,469,926
FY 2021/2022	926,797,823	595,700,001	1,522,497,824	1,519,877,456
FY 2022/2023 (as at March 2023)	762,694,360	321,973,000	1,084,667,360	1,084,065,201
Projections FY 2024/2025	1,075,085,475	646,012,001	1,721,097,476	1,720,095,634

Source: Ad Hoc Committee Report, Table 4 (Cumulative Revenue per Management Units) and Table 5 (Expenditure).

28. The Ad Hoc Committee Report concluded, on the basis of this financial analysis, that Thika Municipality collects enough revenue to sustain its expenses and operations.

Criteria 4: Capacity to Generate Sufficient Revenue to Sustain its Operations

29. The Ad Hoc Committee Report sets out Thika Municipality's total revenue against total expenditure, and the resulting surplus or deficit, for the same period, as follows:

Table 2: Capacity to generate revenue

Financial Year	Total Revenue (Ksh)	Total Expenditure (Ksh)	Surplus/(Deficit) (Ksh)
FY 2018/2019	1,354,114,638	1,352,940,248	1,174,390
FY 2019/2020	1,286,324,737	1,285,214,737	1,110,000
FY 2020/2021	1,351,159,810	1,350,469,926	689,884
FY 2021/2022	1,522,497,824	1,519,877,456	2,620,368
FY 2022/2023 (as at March 2023)	1,084,667,360	1,084,065,201	602,159
Projections FY 2024/2025	1,721,097,476	1,720,095,634	1,001,842

Source: Ad Hoc Committee Report, Table 6 (Revenue Generation Potential).

30. The Report also notes additional revenue streams in past years, which include: World Bank grants under the Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP I) of Kshs. 305,086,600 in both FY 2019/2020 and FY 2020/2021, Ksh. 79,032,965 in FY 2021/2022, and Kshs. 1,194,559 in FY 2022/2023; and Ksh. 135,000,000 under the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Programme (KISIP II) in FY 2023/2024.
31. The report highlighted that the financial analysis shows that Thika Municipality has the capacity to generate sufficient revenue and sustain its operations.

Criteria 5: Provision of Essential Services as per Schedule 1 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act

32. The Ad Hoc Committee Report assesses the provision of essential services under three broad categories: planning and development control, physical infrastructure, and social infrastructure.

(a) Planning and Development Control

33. The report stated that Thika Municipality has a well-established planning and development control section, operating from the Municipality Physical Planning Offices, mandated to receive, vet, approve, or decline development applications. Additionally, the section is mandated to develop and implement development policies and regulations for all zones, to advise members of the public on planning and development matters, and to enforce development regulations within the municipality's boundaries. The department has adequate technical staff who carry out routine monitoring and evaluation of ongoing developments, supported by two departmental vehicles. However, the Report noted a need for additional vehicles as more staff are deployed to the municipality.

(b) Physical Infrastructure

Railway Infrastructure

34. The Ad Hoc Committee Report highlighted that the municipality is serviced by an existing railway line, with plans to add a passenger light rail to Nairobi. It notes an initiative under the Nairobi Metropolitan Service Improvement Programme (NAMSIP) in Thika Municipality which was funded by the World Bank. The initiative rehabilitated existing railway lines and train stations for commuter transport to and from the metropolitan towns of Nairobi including Thika, and to other towns such as Nanyuki. It also covered parking areas, access roads to rail stations, and non-motorised traffic lanes.

Roads Infrastructure

35. It is stated in the report that the municipality has seen rehabilitation of the Kimbo-Matangi-Murera and Gwa Kairu-Mugutha roads, and maintenance of the Kimbo-Kiganjo road. Under the Kenya Urban Support Programme (2018-2022), road

projects undertaken included construction of the JKUAT Gate A – Uchumi Junction road in Juja to bitumen standard, upgrading of Gwa Kairu Road, and upgrading of Mugo Kiburu Road.

36. The municipality is externally served by an eight-lane superhighway, a highway to Garissa and North-Eastern Kenya, and a highway to the central highlands. The Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) constructed 25 kilometres of link roads within Thika Town Constituency to decongest the town. The report highlighted that the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) plans to decongest Thika Town by dualing the Thika-Garissa Highway at an estimated cost of Ksh. 5.5 billion. The Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) is responsible for two class C murram roads within the municipality, earmarked for upgrading to bituminous standard.
37. The municipality has two bus parks, including the newly constructed Makongeni Bus Park. It is served by public transport with a total of 3,251 buses and matatus registered with the Department of Roads, Transport, Public Works and Utilities, which are wholly privately owned.
38. The AdHoc Committee noted that the municipality does not have an existing airport or airstrip, although part of the Del Monte land repossessed by the County Government of Kiambu has been ceded and earmarked for future construction of an airstrip. Currently, the municipality has a direct linkage to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport via the Thika Superhighway and the Eastern Bypass. The Report further references the proposed Kenya Urban Mobility Improvement Project (KUMIP), under which the County Government of Kiambu has proposed non-motorised transport, complete streets, bus park rehabilitation, public space, parking, and street lighting projects within the municipality.

Storm Water Facilities

39. The Ad Hoc Committee Report mentioned that there were existing storm water drainage in all major streets within Thika, including an earth drain along the Kakuzi and Garissa roads. Further that the Municipality, through the Kenya Urban Support

Programme has been used to upgrade storm water drainage systems at Landless. The AdHoc Committee reported that maintenance of all storm water drains within the municipality was ongoing, but the Municipality still needed more investment in storm water management in built-up areas.

Electricity, Reticulation and Street Lighting

40. The Ad Hoc Committee reported that, according to Kenya Power's January 2024 data, Kiambu County had a total of 968,544 electricity accounts, of which 224,681 were in Thika Municipality. The quality of power supply has improved following completion of a 66/11 KV (KiloVolt) substation with two 45 MVA (MegaVolt Amperes) transformers at Makongeni, currently serving approximately 60 percent of the population. The ultra-modern facility, constructed by Kenya Power at a total cost of Kshs 642 million, has adequate capacity to accommodate additional power demand by existing industries that would like to expand their operations, as well as new industrial and commercial enterprises.
41. The Directorate of Public Works and Utility Services has installed flood masts across the municipality, including 11 masts of 30M high, 15 masts of 15M high and 9 masts of 30M high. Additionally, through the Angaza Kiambu initiative, Thika Municipality has installed a total of 315 integrated solar street-lights.

Firefighting and Disaster Management

42. The report mentions the Kiambu County Emergency Fund Act, 2013, which was enacted to establish a fund that is allocated 0.5 percent of the county's annual budget, for purposes of urgent and unforeseen expenditure needs. Additionally, the Municipality has a fire station that operates throughout, and plans are underway to build capacity within the township to ensure a timely fire response. Other achievements of the fire and rescue department include reduced emergency response times, fire safety audits, training of fire officers, and installation of fire hydrants. The fire engines available at the Municipality's fire station are; two 4,500-litre fire engines, one 10,000-litre fire engine, one rescue van, and one 400-litre rapid

intervention vehicle, with a total of 28 staff serving Thika, Juja, Gatundu North, and Gatundu South Municipalities.

Water and Sewer Facilities

43. Thika Municipality, through the Thika Water and Sanitation Company (THIWASCO) and the private sector, has a total of 46,000 water connections serving approximately 205,000 residents, out of which 41,000 are active connections. The total quantity of water supplied is approximately 40,000 cubic metres per day. THIWASCO alone has approximately 32,000 water connections and 12,000 sewerage connections, covering Thika Municipality and its environs which covers an area of roughly 254 square kilometres.
44. In the report, the Adhoc Committee noted that THIWASCO has entered a Ksh. 15.4 billion partnership with the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to upgrade and expand its infrastructure, expected to increase daily water supply to 70,000 cubic metres against a projected demand of 60,000 cubic metres once the town attains city status. Additionally, the Municipality is making efforts to get additional water from the Kariminu II Dam in Gatundu North Sub-County, to adequately address the water shortage in Thika and boost its quest to become a city.
45. The report further states that Thika has a conventional sewer treatment system established in 1978 with a design capacity of 6,000 cubic metres, currently operating at an exceeded capacity of 8,000 cubic metres daily, and that sewer reticulation does not cover the entire town. The AdHoc Committee recommended integrating smart waste management into the proposed Thika industrial smart city.

Postal Services

46. The Ad Hoc Committee highlighted that Thika Municipality has two post offices, Madaraka Post Office and Thika Post Office. The JKUAT Chapex Post Office within the Jomo Kenyatta University compound also provides postal services. The Committee noted that the emergence of digital communication technologies has led to under-utilisation of postal services.

(c) Social Infrastructure

Healthcare Facilities

47. The Ad Hoc Committee reported that healthcare services in the municipality are provided through the County Department of Health Services, comprising dispensaries, private clinics, health centres, nursing homes, and Thika Level V Hospital. They however noted a need to rehabilitate and upgrade public healthcare facilities in the area.

Funeral Parlours, Cemeteries and Ambulance Services

48. Thika Municipality is served by ambulances from County Government health facilities, including Thika Level V Hospital and Gachororo Health Centre, as well as from private hospitals, providing 24-hour emergency services. The report records six cemeteries and burial grounds, including the Thika War Cemetery, two funeral parlours (General Kago and Bishop Okoye Funeral Homes), and one crematorium in the municipality.

Education Facilities

49. The Ad Hoc Committee Report states that the municipality has a well-developed network of Early Childhood Development, primary, secondary, tertiary, and training institutions, both private and public. The Municipality has two national secondary schools (Mang'u High School and Mary Hill Girls' High School), as well as Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, Gretsia University, and Mt Kenya University. It further records four polytechnics, fifteen colleges, vocational and training centres, childcare facilities, a community hall, and a library within the municipality.

Financial Infrastructure

50. The report highlighted that the municipality is served by a network of commercial banks and SACCOs, including Equity Bank, NIC Bank, Barclays Bank, K-Unity

Sacco, Jamii Bora Bank, National Bank of Kenya, Metropolitan Sacco, Standard Chartered, Co-operative Bank, KCB, Family Bank, KWFT, and other non-banking financial institutions. These institutions provide reliable and affordable credit to support local businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises.

Recreational and Sporting Facilities

51. The Ad Hoc Committee reported that the municipality has conference facilities provided by hotels including Kenya Training and Conference Facilities, Senate Hotel, Seagull Hotel, Eton Hotel, Ukombozi Retreat and Conference Centre, and Blue Post Hotel. Thika Municipal Stadium provides a venue for sporting activities and is home to Thika United Football Club. The Report also records Fourteen Falls as a recreational site, Thika Golf Club, and a community hall serving as a Community Centre for its residents.

Control of Drugs, Policing and Enforcement

52. The County Assembly of Kiambu, through the Kiambu County Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, 2018 established a framework responsible for licensing and regulating the production, sale, distribution, and consumption and outdoor advertising of alcoholic drinks. The Act established a Directorate whose functions are to coordinate the establishment, implementation and operations of alcohol treatment and rehabilitation facilities and programmes.
53. The municipality works with security agencies, the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA), and other non-governmental organisations to enforce laws concerning the prevention of sale and rehabilitation of users of drugs and substances. There are four rehabilitation centres in Thika Municipality, that help addicted people recover from substance abuse and mental disorder. The Report further records that the municipality hosts Thika, Juja, and Makongeni Police Stations and ten other patrol bases under the National Police Service, supported by the Nyumba Kumi community policing initiative and private security firms.

Abattoirs

54. According to the report, abattoirs in the municipality are governed under the Kiambu Abattoirs Act, 2015, where the establishment, operations and regulation of abattoirs in the County is provided for. The Committee recorded eleven privately owned abattoirs and slaughterhouses, including the newly constructed Makongeni Slaughterhouse.

Markets

55. The Ad Hoc Committee report noted that market management is governed under the Trade and Market Act, with the Department of Trade as custodian of market infrastructure. The municipality has seven markets namely; Kiandutu, Moi Market, Jamhuri, Wanyua, Ngoliba, Madaraka, and Munyu, each with a market committee comprising traders' representatives. The Report notes a need to integrate street vendors into urban planning through designated open-air trading spaces.

Criteria 6: Public Participation

56. The Ad Hoc Committee Report stated that public participation for the Thika Industrial Smart City application was conducted between 8th and 12th July 2024 at Fountain Brook Hotel Gardens in Thika Municipality. The sector groups identified were; National Government departments; infrastructure, transport, ICT, water and sanitation, and health sector representatives; professionals, civil society organisations, and community-based organisations; universities, higher learning institutions, and student leaders; the informal sector; religious leaders and other sector groups; and ward-based grassroots groups. Stakeholders were also invited to submit written memoranda.
57. Key thematic concerns raised by residents during the exercise, as recorded in the Report, included matters related to physical planning, environment, water and sanitation, waste management; childcare facilities, security and enforcement, infrastructure, markets, education, health services among others. Residents also raised concerns on whether county levies would increase following conferment, to

which the Ad Hoc Committee indicated that any increase would be minimal and commensurate with improved service provision. The report stated that conferment of Thika Industrial Smart City status was highly supported by residents, both through in-person attendance and written memoranda.

58. In their report, the Ad Hoc Committee noted that Thika Municipality has institutionalised resident participation through regular citizen fora, public hearings conducted during the preparation of the County Spatial Plan and the Integrated Development Plans, and market and waste management resident committees.

Criteria 7: Adequate Space for Expansion

59. The Ad Hoc Committee Report states that the County Spatial Plan discourages urban sprawl in Thika Municipality and instead encourages vertical growth through increased densities in the central business district and high- and medium-density residential and commercial zones. This makes it consistent with compact city development principles since compact cities are the most suitable forms. The Report concludes that Thika Municipality has adequate space for expansion, including the Del Monte land and other undeveloped expansive areas.

Criteria 8: Solid Waste Management

60. The report stated that solid waste collection and disposal in Thika is managed by the Directorate of Environment. The municipality generates approximately 140 tonnes of waste per day, of which 60 percent is collected and 30 percent is recovered or recycled, leaving 40 percent uncollected. Thika has a landfill at Kang'oki covering 126 acres, which the committee noted needs to be fenced, while the Gatuanyaga disposal site is used primarily for asbestos disposal. The municipality operates three (3) garbage trucks, five (5) garbage skips, and one (1) skip loader shared with Juja.
61. The Ad Hoc Committee reported that a solid waste management policy was being drafted by the County Environmental Legal Team and that environmental awareness will also be created to the members of the public. They added that the private sector

also plays a key role in waste collection, transfer, and disposal, though it notes that this sector requires proper regulation. The report further notes a proposal to segregate waste at collection points into organic, inorganic (recyclable), and hazardous categories, and to subsequently incinerate waste at Kang'oki.

62. The AdHoc Committee further highlighted various ongoing interventions (at the time of reporting) towards elevation of Thika Municipality to City status. They include:

- (a) Affordable housing project – the County plans to construct 25,000 affordable housing units to cater for 200,000 residents of Thika.
- (b) Enhanced industrialization – the County has delineated an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) with over 100 industries employing over 50,000 Kiambu residents.
- (c) A suitable modern transport network – the County has delineated an area for construction of an airstrip linking to JKIA.
- (d) Upgrading of informal settlements to encourage growth and improve standards of living
- (e) Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) network – the County is developing Ksh. 1 billion worth of NMT infrastructure to allow for walking, cycling, and jogging.
- (f) Solarisation of street lights in Kiambu County
- (g) Improved provision of health services – upon modernising Thika Level VI Hospital, the County plans to have five Level III hospitals to serve the influx population.
- (h) Improvement of water supply and reticulation
- (i) Enhancing trade and development by dualling the Thika-Garissa Highway
- (j) Improvement and modernisation of markets in Thika and streamlining business licensing.

- (k) Increasing efficiency in transport by upgrading 9 bus parks into modern transit termini.
 - (l) Improved solid waste management practices – in collaboration with JICA, the County is adopting the Fukuoka semi-aerobic landfill technology at Kang'oki.
 - (m) Provision of childcare facilities – the County is constructing modern Early Childhood Development Education Centres in all wards of Kiambu County.
63. In their report, the AdHoc Committee concluded that Thika's transformation into a Smart Industrial City is justified, and recommended that Thika Municipality be conferred city status upon approval by the County Assembly of Kiambu and the Senate.
64. The Kiambu County Assembly Sectoral Committee on County planning and Urbanization, reviewed the report by the ad hoc committee and in their report, recommended that Thika Municipality be granted city status as it will be of great benefit to Kiambu County and the Country at large.

2.2 Submissions from the County Government of Kiambu

65. The Governor of Kiambu County appeared before the Committee on 7th August, 2025 as scheduled, accompanied by the Thika Municipal Board and the Ad Hoc Committee.
66. In support of the conferment of city status upon Thika Municipality, the Governor submitted as follows;
- (a) Thika will be the first City in the Mount Kenya region and will serve approximately 30% of Kenya's population residing in the nine (9) counties of the region;

- (b) Thika is located along the Trans-Africa Highway corridor, which serves both the Southern and Northern regions of Africa, positioning it as a trade corridor for countries in the South of Sahara;
- (c) Locally, Thika City will serve the central region of East Africa due to its linkage to Nairobi City, being approximately 40 km from the Nairobi Central Business District (CBD);
- (d) Thika is the second most industrialized town in Kenya, with more than 1,000 industries engaged in agro-processing, manufacturing, value addition, mining, and financial services;
- (e) Thika has a population of over 500,000 people, with an additional population of about one million people who directly or indirectly depend on the town as a centre for employment, education, administrative services, leisure, recreation, and business;
- (f) Thika City is well endowed with an intermodal transport network, including a Superhighway connecting Thika to Nairobi City, a railway line, and a transit highway to the northern part of Kenya. It is also located approximately 40 km from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which is the largest airport in the Great Lakes region;
- (g) Thika is an export hub for the Mt. Kenya region and would host over 100 industries earmarked under the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), supported by a growing urban population that will serve as the labour force to the industries
- (h) Thika has over 10 universities and tertiary institutions with centres for research and innovation, which serve as centres of excellence, which will provide a strong foundation for future growth in ICT and technological development;
- (i) Thika has the largest waste management facility in the Mount Kenya region, complemented by a sewerage treatment plant and solid waste management systems, and is in the process of developing an engineered landfill to modernize its waste management infrastructure;

- (j) Thika is a centre for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with over five (5) markets, including Jamhuri, Madaraka, and Makongeni markets;
 - (k) Thika is a centre for leisure and hospitality, with modern urban green spaces such as Christina Wangari Gardens and Mama Ngina Park, as well as numerous hotels and conference facilities; and
 - (l) Administratively, Thika Municipality hosts the Municipal Headquarters (County Town Hall), Thika Law Courts, the Huduma Centre, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA), and the Land Registry, among others.
67. The Governor further submitted the plans by the County Government of Kiambu to improve the Municipality in its bid for elevation to Thika City status, which included —
- (a) That the County had allocated land for the construction of 25,000 affordable housing units to cater for approximately 200,000 residents of Thika;
 - (b) Developing an Export Processing Zone with over 100 industries, employing over 50,000 residents of Kiambu;
 - (c) Construction of a suitable modern transport network, including an airport that will serve Europe, America, Africa, China, and South East Asia;
 - (d) Upgrading informal settlements (Kiang'ombe, Umoja, and Kiandutu) through tenure regularization to encourage growth and improve the standards of living;
 - (e) Development of a Ksh. 1 billion Non-Motorized Transport Network to facilitate walking, cycling, and jogging, thereby improving the quality of life of residents. The initiative is also intended to reduce carbon emissions from motor vehicles and improve public health standards;
 - (f) Installation of Ksh. 500 million worth of solar street lighting to enhance a 24-hour economy and improve security, thereby boosting the living standards of Thika City residents;

- (g) Doing Land Value Capture - by leveraging on the land endowment in Delmonte and partnering with investors to create value and in return generate wealth for the residents of Thika;
- (h) Investment of Ksh. 6 billion, in partnership with the National Government, for water reticulation to serve over 100,000 residents;
- (i) Opening up the Northern Corridor for trade by dualing the Thika–Garissa Highway;
- (j) Supporting SMEs by investing Ksh. 250 million for the construction of modern shops around Thika Stadium, development of 15 markets, and streamlining business licensing to improve efficiency and lower the cost of doing business; and
- (k) Increasing efficiency in transport by upgrading nine (9) bus parks into terminal facilities linking Thika with surrounding urban areas for the transport of people, goods, and services.

68. In the course of the deliberations, the Committee raised several issues that needed to be addressed in the quest to upgrade the municipality to city status. These included -

- (a) Development of a comprehensive policy on the management of industrial accidents and emergencies to ensure occupational safety and minimize harm to people and the environment. The policy should address accident prevention, preparedness, and response;
- (b) Establishment of a structured beautification programme to enhance aesthetic appeal, environmental quality, and overall livability of a city, including urban parks, garden development, street art, and related initiatives;
- (c) Clear definition and demarcation of the exact geographical boundaries of Thika proposed for elevation to city status;
- (d) Development of effective waste management and river protection policies to promote city sustainability, including proper waste disposal, pollution control, and environmental monitoring;

- (e) Development of a comprehensive health care plan for quality, and accessible healthcare services that address urban health challenges, including the availability of adequate healthcare facilities, emergency services and specialized medical services;
- (f) Establishment of a sustainable and efficient revenue collection system to support the city's financial stability and development, including diversified revenue streams and efficient tax administration systems; and
- (g) Addressing aspects of modern cemetery design and management commensurate with city status.

Additional submissions from the County Government of Kiambu

69. The County Government provided additional submissions in response to the issues raised, vide a letter dated 28th April 2026, Ref. KCG/ADM/31/4/VOL.X/385. *(Annex5)*

(i) Development of a Comprehensive Policy on Industrial Accidents and Emergencies

70. The County Government submitted that Thika has made significant strides in strengthening the management of industrial accidents and emergencies by aligning its urban planning and governance systems with the **Sendai¹ Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**. The County noted that as one of Kenya's most established industrial centres – hosting major industries such as Bidco Africa, Del Monte Kenya, Kenya Vehicle Manufacturers, and Thika Cloth Mills – it has recognised the

¹ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 is the principal global framework for disaster risk reduction. Adopted by United Nations Member States on 18 March 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, it succeeds the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015) and sets out seven global targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks, strengthen resilience, and protect lives, livelihoods and development gains.

need to proactively manage risks associated with large-scale manufacturing, chemical processing, and high-volume logistics.

71. The County highlighted the following key measures already in place:

- (a) **Risk Understanding:** Systematic hazard mapping and risk profiling of key industrial zones has been undertaken, enabling identification of high-risk facilities and processes, thereby informing zoning decisions and improving land-use planning.
- (b) **Risk Governance:** Thika has enhanced coordination between county authorities, regulatory agencies, and industry players. Clearer compliance requirements and oversight mechanisms have been introduced, with industries increasingly required to adopt standardised safety protocols and emergency preparedness plans.
- (c) **Disaster Risk Reduction:** The town has made investments in disaster risk reduction for resilience including improvements in firefighting capacity, emergency response infrastructure, and access routes within industrial areas. A functional fire station with a fire engine is operational, and the town also works with the private sector to enhance emergency response. Operational ambulances and trained personnel are available to respond to emergencies.
- (d) **Preparedness and Response:** Emergency planning and simulation exercises have been institutionalised, bringing together industries, emergency services, and health facilities to test and refine coordinated response mechanisms.

72. The County submitted that the development of a comprehensive policy on industrial accidents and emergencies would consolidate these gains by formalising standards on occupational safety, strengthening enforcement, and ensuring that the protection of human life, property, and the environment remains central to Thika's industrial growth.

(ii) Establishment of a Structured Beautification Programme

73. The County Government submitted that it has established and continues to implement a structured beautification and urban greening programme within Thika Municipality as part of the broader vision of transforming the area into the proposed Thika Industrial Smart City. The programme is implemented through the Department of Water, Environment, Natural Resources, Energy and Climate Change (WENRECC) in collaboration with Municipal Management structures and other stakeholders.
74. Key interventions highlighted under this programme include:
- (a) **Urban Parks and Garden Development** – The County has undertaken upgrading, rehabilitation, and routine maintenance of key urban parks and gardens, including Mama Ngina Park, Christina Garden, and Mugumoini Garden. Interventions include landscape redesign using indigenous shade trees and ornamental plant species, and installation of benches, pedestrian walkways, litter bins, and perimeter improvements.
 - (b) **Street Landscaping and Urban Greening** – Extensive Street landscaping has been implemented along major roads (Gatitu Street, Kenyatta Avenue, and Haile Selassie Avenue), including planting and maintenance of avenue trees, establishment of landscaped verges and median strips, and enhancement of cleanliness and visual order within urban streetscapes.
 - (c) **Roundabout Beautification** – Strategic beautification of major roundabouts and traffic nodes has been undertaken, including installation of ornamental flower beds, shrubs, and low-maintenance ground cover vegetation, making the roundabouts serve as focal urban landmarks.
 - (d) **Environmental Quality and Livability** – The programme contributes to improved air quality, urban cooling, storm water absorption, promotion of biodiversity through indigenous landscaping, and improved mental and social wellbeing through quality public environments.

75. The County further submitted that future initiatives include development of additional neighbourhood parks, expansion of tree planting to secondary and feeder roads, establishment of thematic and indigenous gardens, and integration of public art and cultural installations to enrich the visual identity of the municipality. Planned partnerships include Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Street initiatives, collaboration with the private sector under Corporate Social Responsibility programmes and engagement of community groups and youth in maintenance activities.

(iii) Definition and Demarcation of the Exact Geographical Boundaries of Thika Municipality

76. The County Government submitted that the proposed Thika Smart City geographical extent maintains the existing administrative boundary of Thika Municipality. Key geographical details submitted include:
- (a) Thika lies approximately **42 km northeast of Nairobi**, near the meeting point of the Thika and Chania Rivers.
 - (b) It is positioned at latitude 1°05' South and longitude 37°05' East, at an elevation of roughly **1,478 metres above sea level**.
 - (c) The proposed city is bounded by Juja to the south near Weteithie, Gatundu North subcounty to the west, Murang'a County boundary along Chania River to the north, and Machakos County boundary at Gatuanyaga to the east.
 - (d) The total area is approximated at **201.35 square kilometres**.
77. The County submitted that physical boundary markers have been erected at the key boundary points, including the Western Boundary at Thika-Gatundu North side, the Southern Boundary at Weteithia-Juja Municipality, the Northern Boundary at Chania Falls River, and the Eastern Boundary at Gatuanyaga.

(iv) Development of Effective Waste Management and River Protection Policies

78. The County Government submitted that Thika has an elaborate waste disposal mechanism borrowed from the Fukuoka Landfill Programme at the Kangoki disposal site. They added that:
- (a) The **Kangoki disposal site**, located in Kamenu Ward, Thika Municipality, serves as the primary disposal site for Thika Municipality and the entire Kiambu County since 2018, covering a total area of 126 acres.
 - (b) The site currently receives between **1,200–1,500 tonnes of commingled waste daily**, serving as both a waste disposal facility and an economic hub hosting over **800 waste pickers** who make a living through waste potential.
 - (c) The County is intentionally transitioning from open dumpsite operations to a **sanitary engineered landfill** which is the recognized international standard. The county has invested in Semi-Aerobic engineered landfill based on Fukuoka Technology.
79. On **river protection**, the County submitted plans to initiate restoration and landscaping programmes along the Chania River and Thika River through development of riparian green corridors, establishment of linear parks and pedestrian greenways, and strengthening protection of riparian reserves and ecological buffers.
80. For the smart waste management transition, the County submitted plans to deploy IoT-enabled smart bins with fill-level sensors, GIS-based logistics optimisation for collection routes, AI and robotics for automated waste sorting, and blockchain technology for traceability and accountability in the waste supply chain.

(v) Development of a Comprehensive Health Care Plan

81. The County Government submitted that it has developed and operationalised a comprehensive healthcare plan aimed at ensuring quality, accessible, resilient, and specialised healthcare services in Thika Municipality.
82. They noted that Thika Municipality has a well-established healthcare ecosystem comprising **202 health facilities** across public, private, and faith-based sectors.

These include 178 Level II facilities, 6 Level III facilities, 16 Level IV facilities, and 2 Level V hospitals.

83. Highlighting Specialised Medical Services at **Thika Level 5 Hospital**, the county mentioned that the hospital has evolved into a regional referral facility and centre of excellence hosting highly specialized units including
- (a) Cancer Centre (established 2019, expanded to include chemotherapy services in 2024, with over 500 cancer patients attended to in the last four months alone);
 - (b) Intensive Care Unit (ICU) – a modern 6-bed critical care facility (Thika Municipality has a total of 18 ICU beds, approximately 5.26 per 100,000 population);
 - (c) Renal Unit with 10-bed capacity and five fully functional dialysis machines;
 - (d) Eye Unit, Advanced Radiology Department, Dental and Maxillofacial Unit, Specialized Laboratory Services, and Reproductive Health and Neonatal Services.
84. On Emergency Preparedness and disaster response, the County submitted that a modern Emergency Operations Centre functioning as a 24-hour command and dispatch centre has been operationalised, coordinating responses to disease outbreaks, fires, floods, chemical spills, and mass casualty incidents. The County currently operates **15 fully equipped ambulances** with an average of 55 referrals weekly, 30% of which are maternal and neonatal emergencies.
85. On Maternal Health, Thika Level 5 Hospital has achieved a maternal mortality rate of **5.1 per 100,000 live births**, significantly lower than Kenya's national rate of 355 per 100,000 live births.
86. In addition, the county government stated that the operationalization of the Kiambu County Health Services Facility Improvement Fund has strengthened financial sustainability and service delivery. Between FY 2023/2024 and half-year FY 2025/2026, Thika Level 5 Hospital generated **KES 1.69 billion**, representing 98% of all revenue generated by public health facilities within Thika Sub-County.

87. The County also mentioned engaging in partnerships and collaborations with institutions including WHO, UNICEF, AMREF, Kenya Red Cross, KEMRI, and JKUAT.

(vi) Establishment of a Sustainable and Efficient Revenue Collection System

88. The County Government submitted that it has established a sustainable, efficient, and technology-driven revenue collection system anchored on the deployment of a comprehensive **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System**. The ERP integrates Revenue Collection Systems, Hospital Management Information Systems (HMIS), Land Management Systems, and Financial Reporting Modules into a unified ecosystem.
89. They stated that the system supports USSD-based payments, enabling accessible revenue collection for all citizens including those without smartphones, as well as mobile applications for real-time collection by field officers. A key feature of the system is the adoption of a cashless, invoice-first architecture, eliminating informal cash handling and ensuring all transactions are digitally recorded and traceable.
90. The County submitted that since its implementation, **Own-Source Revenue (OSR)** increased by 45%, growing from KES 4.5 billion in FY 2023/2024 to KES 5.45 billion in FY 2024/2025. As at 31st March 2026, the County Own Source Revenue had increased by 15% compared to the same period the previous year. The Municipality's own source revenue (OSR) grew from Ksh. 1.06 billion in FY 2023/2024 to Ksh. 1.142 billion in FY 2024/2025, with Ksh. 977 million collected as at 31st March 2026.

(vii) Establishment of a Sustainable Plan and Management of Cemeteries Suitable for City Settings

91. The County Government submitted that Thika has seven public spaces designated for the departed. They include the Hindu Crematorium, Muslim Cemetery, Thika

War Cemetery, and the public cemeteries at Kiganjo, Ngoliba, Maguguni and Kiandutu. The County provided details of their location, size and current operational status.

92. Key submissions were that the **Hindu Crematorium** has been upgraded with modern, state-of-the-art chimneys for effective smoke control, a newly developed gas cremation area at finishing stage, and an improved emission control system. The **Kiandutu Cemetery**, being the largest and most utilised, has plans for fencing, improved sanitation facilities, and planning for alternative burial space due to limited capacity.

Additional Information on facilities and services

93. The County Government submitted additional information on several facilities and services that demonstrate Thika's readiness for city status:

- (a) **Airport/Airstrip** – The County submitted that while the proposed Thika City does not currently possess an airport or airstrip, plans are underway to develop one. The project centres on land previously held by Del Monte, which the County Government successfully repossessed and ceded a portion specifically for construction of an airstrip. The municipality currently relies on direct linkage to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) via the Thika Superhighway and the Eastern Bypass.
- (b) **Theatre and Museum** – The County submitted the existence of two notable theatre and performance facilities within the municipality. The Eugenia Amphitheatre at Eugenia Park Arts and Recreational Centre, (located at Exit 14, Kenyatta Road) is modelled after the shape of an African hut and accommodates up to 276 guests. Additionally, the Tamasha Auditorium at the M-PESA Foundation Academy, located off Thika-Mang'u Road, accommodating up to 800 people in a theatre-style setup.

(c) **Cultural and Heritage Sites** – The County submitted that Thika hosts notable cultural and heritage sites, including the Mugo wa Kibiru Shrine, a cultural and historical site located near Makongeni area in Thika. The site is currently being rehabilitated and maintained by Kiambu County and the National Museums of Kenya. The Thika War Cemetery, a World War II burial site maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, was also highlighted as important for historical education, remembrance, and tourism.

(d) **Integrated Urban Development Plan (ISUDP)** – The County submitted that Thika has developed and secured full ratification and approval from both the County Executive and the County Assembly of a comprehensive Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan (ISUDP) covering the period 2015–2035, which serves as the legal framework for development control, land use, and capital investment within the municipality.

94. On **Revenue Performance** the County submitted a cumulative revenue analysis for Thika Municipality Management Units for FY 2022/2023 to 2024/2025, recording a **Total of KES 1,142,417,588** in FY 2024/2025, up from KES 935,111,010 in FY 2022/2023, reflecting consistent revenue growth across all sectors. This is indicated in the table below.

Financial Year	Total Revenue (Ksh.)	Growth (%)
2022/2023	935,111,010	–
2023/2024	1,050,143,239	12%
2024/2025	1,142,417,588	9%

95. The County Government also submitted that Thika Municipality has institutionalised public participation as part of its planning and decision-making processes, in line with constitutional requirements. It was indicated that public participation is undertaken through mechanisms such as public barazas, stakeholder

forums, and involvement of residents in planning instruments including the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and spatial plans. The County further noted that residents and community organisations are actively engaged in development projects, policy formulation, and infrastructure planning, ensuring that public views are incorporated into decision-making processes.

Further responses from the County Government of Kiambu

96. Upon request for clarification by the Committee, the County Government of Kiambu submitted additional information vide a letter dated 9th June, 2026 and referenced KCG/ADM/31/4/VOL.X/420.

97. The County Government responded on the respective issues as summarized below:

(a) Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan (ISUDP) 2015 – 2035

98. The Committee sought confirmation on whether the Thika ISUDP (2015 – 2035) originally envisioned the elevation of Thika Municipality to city status, and if so, sought citation of the specific provisions supporting this position. If the plan did not envision city status, the county should indicate any plans of amendment.

99. The County Government confirmed that the Thika ISUDP did envision the elevation of Thika Municipality to city status. In support of this position, the County cited specific sections of the ISUDP as highlighted in the table below.

Table 3: Provisions in the ISUDP envisioning elevation of Thika Municipality to city status

S.NO	Specific Section and Topic	Provision Justifying City Status
1.	Section 1.4 on Scope of Work Topic; Formulation of a City Vision Page 4, and pg 420-421	The Scope of Work for the Thika ISUDP included formulation of a long-term development vision for the Urban area, culminating in the preparation of a “ city vision ” for Thika. The inclusion of city visioning shows that the ISUDP contemplated Thika’s evolution towards city status.
2.	Section 5.4.2 on Road Connectivity Topic: Road Connectivity	The Plan notes that improvements in public transport services would be necessary to meet the future travel demand of “ the city ”, indicating that the planning

	Page 163	framework anticipated Thika's evolution into a larger urban centre.
3.	Section 5.4.4 Topic: Bus Terminal Capacity Page 165	The proposal to establish a dedicated intercity bus terminal and a separate city bus park demonstrates that the ISUDP anticipated significant growth in passenger movement and transport demand. This supports Thika's aspiration to attain and sustain city status.
4.	Section 5.6 Topic: Environmental Management Plan Page 203	The ISUDP recognizes that sustainable urban development requires comprehensive environmental planning and management. It reflects a city-oriented planning approach aimed at ensuring that Thika's expansion is supported by adequate environmental safeguards and urban services.
5.	Topic: Presentation and Group Exercises for Formulation of a City Vision. Page 402	During the visioning exercise, participants were invited to envision their " dream city " and articulate the type of urban centre they wished Thika to become over the 20-year planning horizon. This shows that the ISUDP was planning for Thika's transformation into an advanced urban centre consistent with city status aspirations
6.	Continuation of proceedings Page 424	During the Validation workshop of the ISUDP, a representative of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development stated that proposed amendments to the Urban Areas and Cities Act would reduce the population threshold for city status to 250,000 residents, and that Thika would consequently become the sixth city in Kenya.

(b) Geographical Boundaries and Boundary Disputes

100. The Committee sought a clear definition and precise demarcation of Thika Municipality's geographical boundaries, including the total area, a description of boundaries with neighbouring areas, confirmation of physical boundary markers, and a definitive statement on the existence of any boundary disputes.
101. The County Government submitted that the proposed Thika Smart Industrial City covers a total geographical area of approximately 218 square kilometres, consistent with the existing administrative boundary of the municipality. The County described the boundaries as follows: to the south, the municipality borders Juja Sub-County in the vicinity of Weteithic; to the west, it is bounded by Gatundu North Sub-County;

to the north, the boundary follows the natural course of the Chania River, which also forms the Murang'a County boundary; and to the east, the boundary is delimited by the Machakos County boundary at Gatuanyaga.

102. The County provided coordinates for each of the four boundary points and attached supporting photographs, to confirm that physical boundary markers have been erected at the northern, southern, eastern, and western points. The County further gave a definitive statement that there are no existing or pending boundary disputes between the Municipality and with the neighbouring Murang'a and Machakos Counties.

(c) Disparities in Revenue and Expenditure Information

103. The Committee noted significant variances between the revenue and expenditure figures submitted by the County Government and the data verified by the Office of the Auditor-General, particularly for FY 2018/2019 to FY 2022/2023, and noted further that financial statements for Thika Municipality had not been submitted for audit for Financial Years 2018/2019, 2019/2020, and 2020/2021. The Committee requested for a detailed explanation and reconciliation, confirmation of the status of financial statement submission, and complete, reconciled revenue and expenditure figures.
104. The County Government submitted that there is no disparity between the revenue information it submitted and the data verified by the Office of the Auditor-General, and additionally stated that there is no disparity in respect of the expenditure information. The County government further referenced the letter from the Office of the Auditor General to the Committee on Devolution (letter dated 2nd March, 2026) stating that it concurs with the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Application for Conferment of City status to Thika Municipality.
105. On the question of financial statements, the County confirmed that independent financial statements for Thika Municipality were not submitted for Financial Years 2018/2019, 2019/2020, and 2020/2021, explaining that the municipality's financial

performance for those years had instead been consolidated and incorporated within the audited County Executive financial statements, which the County states was the prevailing reporting practice at the time. The County submitted that the requirement for independent financial reporting by municipalities only became effective from Financial Year 2021/2022, pursuant to a National Treasury Circular Ref. AG.4/16/3 Vol.II (66) dated 6th July 2022, issued under Sections 192 to 194 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012.

106. The table below shows the summary of revenue collected, as submitted by the County Government of Kiambu, from FY 2018/2019 to FY 2024/2025

Financial Year	Own Revenue collected (Ksh)
FY 2018/2019	876,714,638
FY 2019/2020	728,477,905
FY 2020/2021	796,763,810
FY 2021/2022	926,797,823
FY 2022/2023	935,111,010
FY2023/2024	1,050,143,239
FY 2024/2025	1,142,417,588

(d) Memoranda of Understanding with Partner Institutions

107. The Committee sought confirmation as to whether Memoranda of Understanding, formal partnership agreements, or collaborative arrangements exist between the County Government of Kiambu and/or Thika Municipality and the following institutions mentioned in their previous submissions to the Committee: the World Health Organization (WHO), AMREF Health Africa, UNICEF, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), and the Kenya Red Cross Society.

108. The County Government stated that, through its Department of Health, it has had collaborative engagements and partnership with various development partners. They added that the County Government has signed MoUs with the Kenya Red Cross Society, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA). The county has also engaged with AMREF Health Africa and UNICEF.

2.3 Submissions from The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

109. Upon request by the Committee to confirm the population for Thika Municipality, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics submitted data from the 2019 Population Census showing the population of Thika by administrative units. (*Annex 5*)
110. From the submissions the total population of Thika East and Thika West is **284,727**. This is highlighted under the table below:

Table 1: Population for Thika Municipality

Sub-County	Total	Male	Female	Intersex
Thika East	38,953	19,687	19,262	4
Thika West	245,774	120,674	125,082	18
Total	284,727	140,361	144,344	22

Source: Extracted from the data submitted by KNBS

111. It is worth noting that the Ad Hoc Committee's report had cited a population of **279,429** (which is the population indicated in the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Report, Volume I). The KNBS submission to the Committee actually places the population slightly higher. However, this is still comfortably above the 250,000 threshold.

2.4 Submissions from The Office of the Auditor General (OAG)

112. By a letter dated 2nd March, 2026 and referenced OAG/CG/22/CONF/ (19), the Auditor General submitted information on revenue generated by Thika Municipality – County Government of Kiambu, in response to the Committee's request. (*Annex 5*)
113. The OAG submitted that, as part of the revenue verification exercise for Thika Municipality, the audit team accessed and reviewed detailed revenue source records generated from the County Revenue Management Systems, audited financial statements, hospitals revenue ledgers, as well as supplementary revenue ledgers provided by the Kiambu County Revenue Department.
114. The revenue collected over the seven (7) financial years totals **Kshs. 6,472,198,984**.
115. The table below indicates the revenues as provided by the Office of the Auditor General.

Table 2: Revenue – As verified by OAG

Financial Year	Revenue Verified by OAG in (Kshs.)
2018/2019	876,714,638
2019/2020	728,477,905
2020/2021	796,763,810
2021/2022	926,797,823
2022/2023	935,111,010
2023/2024	1,065,016,210
2024/2025	1,142,417,588
Total	6,472,198,984

116. The Auditor General further indicated that the cumulative total expenditure incurred by the Municipality from FY2018/2019 to FY2024/2025 totals **Kshs. 272,680,265**,

based on audited financial statements. The expenditures are as highlighted in the table below.

Table 3: Expenditure – As verified by OAG

Financial Year	Expenditure Verified by OAG (Kshs.)
2018/2019	Financial Statements not submitted to OAG for audit
2019/2020	Financial Statements not submitted to OAG for audit
2020/2021	Financial Statements not submitted to OAG for audit
2021/2022	118,453,315
2022/2023	98,125,684
2023/2024	9,900,920
2024/2025	46,200,346
Total	272,680,265

117. The Auditor General noted that the County Management did not prepare and submit financial statements for Thika Municipality for audit for the financial years 2018/2019, 2019/2020, and 2020/2021, as reported in the Report of the Auditor General on Thika Municipality for the year ended 30th June, 2022.

2.5 Submissions from the National Lands Commission (NLC)

118. The National Land Commission (NLC) submitted its views on the application for conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, vide a letter dated 31st October, 2025, REF NLC/SEN/10/31/LUP/GEN/3/ (88).
119. The NLC noted that under Article 67 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, it is mandated to manage public land on behalf of the National and County Governments. Additionally, the Commission monitors and has oversight responsibilities over land use planning in Kenya among other functions. In this regard, the Commission's

oversight role is fundamental in ensuring that the process of city elevation is carried out smoothly, transparently, and in a manner that promotes sustainable land development.

120. However, the NLC noted that any pending boundary issues should be deliberated and determined for efficient management of the city.
121. Upon evaluation of the provisions of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, Sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and the schedule on services, the NLC was of the view that Thika Municipality meets the threshold for a city conferment. The Commission therefore raised no adverse comment on the matter.

2.6 Submissions from The Thika Residents Association

122. The Thika Residents Association made their submissions through a letter dated 29th October 2025. The Association was in support for the Conferment of City Status to Thika Municipality and therefore expressed its gratitude to the Senate and all relevant offices for facilitating the process.
123. The Association noted that since 2016, it has actively engaged in stakeholder meetings and forums to promote inclusive representation and development planning for the community, fostering collaboration among residents, businesses and stakeholders.
124. The Association expressed support for the elevation of Thika to a Smart City, citing the following anticipated benefits:
 - (a) Infrastructural development – the Association noted that population growth has been rapid but infrastructural development has not matched the growth, hence city status would address this gap.
 - (b) Increased investment and job opportunities – becoming a city would attract more investment, which in turn would increase employment opportunities for residents.

- (c) Improved public services – as more people come to live and invest in the city, there would be more Public Service Centres that would upgrade the quality of life of residents.

125. The Association reaffirmed its dedication to supporting the implementation of the City Charter for the benefit of all Thika residents and stakeholders, and expressed its commitment to continued collaboration with the Senate and relevant authorities.

2.7 Submissions from Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-Operative Society Ltd

126. The Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-operative Society Ltd expressed support for the elevation of Thika to city status and submitted the following views:

- (a) More people migrating to the city would increase demand for food, boosting farmers' income.
- (b) City status would attract investors to partner with farmers in either animal feeds production, abattoir operations, or meat processing.
- (c) More industries will be set up thereby creating job opportunities for their children.
- (d) As farming becomes attractive, the colleges in Thika would draw more people to improve their agricultural skills, raising the quality of training available locally.
- (e) The farmers have been impacted heavily by poor road networks, where their farm produce don't get to the market on time especially when it rains. Therefore, City status would unlock more funding for Thika to invest in road infrastructure.

127. The Society expressed its desire for the city status vision to be realised soon.

2.8 Submissions from the Thika Small Traders Association

128. The Chairperson of the Thika Small Traders Association, Mr. Joshua Kariuki Njuguna, made submissions on behalf of the association.

129. Thika Small Traders stated that they have no objection to the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality. However, the Association requested that the following issues be addressed before the conferment of city status:
- a) That stakeholders be directly involved in the changes that will arise from the elevation to city status.
 - b) That drainage systems be put in place, as the current ones do not serve the purpose.
 - c) Re-carpeting of the feeder roads, given that the current ones are full of potholes.
 - d) Relocation of Thika Stadium to create room for a market place for small traders.
 - e) Upgrading of all hospitals within Thika Municipality.
 - f) Enlargement of water supply, since the current supply is rationed.
 - g) Construction of enough public schools to address the current ratio of 1:80 per class.
 - h) That adequate security measures be put in place.

2.9 Submissions from Public Participation

130. The Committee received various views and submissions by way of memoranda submitted through the Clerk's office and orally during the public hearing exercise held on 8th April, 2026.
131. The memoranda were submitted by a wide range of stakeholders, including institutional bodies, associations, organised groups, community organisations, business entities and other members of the public. These include;
- (1) The National Lands Commission (NLC);
 - (2) The Speaker of the County Assembly of Murang'a, appearing on behalf of the Governor of Murang'a County;
 - (3) Representatives of the four wards of Thika Municipality (Township Ward, Kamenu, Ngoliba, and Gatuanyaga Ward)
 - (4) The Thika Residents Association;

- (5) The Kiambu County Poultry Farmers Co-operative Society Ltd;
- (6) The Thika Small Traders Association;
- (7) The Kiambu Former Councilors Group;
- (8) The Kiambu County Youth Assembly (KYA) Congress;
- (9) The Jirani Wema Community – Thika Landless Community Based Organisation;
- (10) Green Warriors;
- (11) The Kamenu Stages BodaBoda Association;
- (12) Thika Motor Dealers (K) Ltd;
- (13) The Thika Town Vendors/Stadium Wall Traders;
- (14) The Thika Sausage & Eggs Vendors Self Help Group;
- (15) The Thika BodaBoda Association;
- (16) Thika Market Traders;
- (17) The Thika Industrialists Association;
- (18) The Association of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs);
- (19) The Chamber of Commerce;
- (20) The Thika Matatu Association;
- (21) The Thika Women Residents Association;
- (22) The Thika Hawkers Association;
- (23) Representatives of religious groups;
- (24) Representative of the Youth;
- (25) Representatives of university students;
- (26) Representative of Mount Kenya University Council
- (27) Representatives of municipal managers; and
- (28) Various members of the public, including community leaders, professionals and experts.

132. A majority of stakeholders expressed support for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, while only two (2) stakeholders opposed the application. A detailed matrix of all submissions is annexed to this Report. (*Annex 4*)

133. The main reasons highlighted in support of the application were consistent across the stakeholders. These included:
- (i) Thika's established economic and industrial base, often compared to Birmingham in the United Kingdom, with over 50 major manufacturing facilities, agro-processing plants and a growing service sector;
 - (ii) Thika's strategic location along the Thika Superhighway approximately 42 kilometres from Nairobi, positioning it as a gateway to Central Kenya and a regional trade and logistics hub;
 - (iii) A population of approximately 279,429 as recorded in the 2019 Census, which surpasses the statutory threshold under the UACA, Cap 275;
 - (iv) The expectation that city status would attract greater investment, expand the local revenue base and create employment, particularly for the youth;
 - (v) Enhanced access to national government conditional grants and improved governance frameworks; and
 - (vi) Alignment of the application with national development priorities, including Kenya Vision 2030, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).
134. Despite the broad support, stakeholders raised a number of concerns and challenges that needed to be addressed including:
- (i) Inadequate road networks within residential estates, with most areas outside the town centre lacking tarmac coverage;
 - (ii) Insufficient drainage systems and persistent flooding in several parts of the town;
 - (iii) Limited water supply coverage and rationed service delivery;
 - (iv) Insecurity in certain parts of the town, particularly at night;
 - (v) Inadequate solid waste management and industrial pollution;
 - (vi) Absence of modern markets and designated trading spaces for small and informal traders;

- (vii) The risk that city status could result in higher service charges, including water, sewerage and rates, without commensurate improvement in services for ordinary residents; and
- (viii) Legal and procedural objections raised by some members of the public, questioning compliance to the law on issues of public participation prior to the application and other legal requirements.

135. Stakeholders also made several recommendations for the County Government of Kiambu to prioritize and the Senate to consider as they deliberate on the application for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality. These included:

- (i) That the challenges highlighted and existing infrastructure deficits be addressed before or concurrently with the conferment of city status;
- (ii) That a phased and conditional approach to operationalising city status be adopted, tied to demonstrable fiscal discipline and governance capacity;
- (iii) That a City Directorate of Environment be established and a Strategic Environmental Assessment be undertaken as part of the transition;
- (iv) That youth, persons with disabilities, small traders and informal sector workers be meaningfully included in city planning and governance processes;
- (v) That the BodaBoda sector, hawkers and other informal transport and trade operators be recognized and integrated into the city framework; and
- (vi) That the city governance structure incorporates robust mechanisms for public participation and accountability.

136. The Stakeholders emphasized that the conferment of city status must translate into tangible improvements in the quality of life for all residents of Thika.

2.10 Inspection of the Municipality's key facilities and Amenities

137. The Committee toured and inspected various amenities and services provided by the Municipality to ascertain compliance with the requirements of the First Schedule of

the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275. The Committee conducted inspection of; Gatitu Road; Rosary Early Childhood Development Education Centre (ECDE); the Kiambu County Level 5 Hospital; the Thika Stadium; the Mama Ngina Peoples' Park; Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO); and Thika Fire Station.

a) Thika Level V Hospital

138. Thika Level V Hospital is a Regional Referral facility and teaching hospital serving beyond Kiambu County to surrounding counties of Murang'a, Machakos, and Kitui counties. It is also a centre of excellence for reproductive health services, committed to delivering accessible, equitable and high-quality services aimed at improving maternal and neonatal outcomes in line with national standards.
139. During the inspection, the Committee made the following observations;
- (i) The hospital has a bed capacity of 300, including a specialized 163-bed Reproductive Health Wing, a robust Emergency Casualty Unit, and a Critical Care Unit (ICU/HDU).
 - (ii) The hospital offers advanced diagnostics and treatment, including Renal Dialysis and Oncology support.
 - (iii) The hospital has a newborn unit, with a reported average of 70 to 80 babies delivered per day.
 - (iv) For Level 6 (National Referral), Thika maintains strong external linkages, seamlessly referring complex neurosurgical or specialized oncology cases from Thika Level V to Level 6 institutions in Nairobi, such as Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH).
140. The hospital management highlighted the need for a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and urged the county government to establish one in the facility

b) Thika Stadium

141. Thika Stadium is located in Township Ward, Thika Sub-County. The Committee observed that the stadium is currently under construction and upgrading. The

Governor informed the Committee that in collaboration with the National Government, the Ministry of Defence plans to upgrade the stadium to a 10,000-seater capacity.

142. The Committee observed the following:

- (i) The stadium has four 10,000-litre water tanks. Two are in good condition and mounted on steel stands, while two are reported to be leaking.
- (ii) There are two spectator stands, a metal fabricated stand and a stone-built stand. The metal fabricated stand was constructed in the financial year 2023/2024.
- (iii) There is a swimming pool and changing rooms under construction. The swimming pool is 90 percent complete, awaiting finishing, installation of pump and tiles. The changing rooms are complete, with finishing and tiling remaining.
- (iv) There are several toilets in the stadium for both male and female use.
- (v) There is a standard football pitch with grass planted and secured by interior mesh wire fencing.
- (vi) There is an operational basketball court built to Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) standards, currently being used by the Thika Basketball League.
- (vii) Construction of 600 stalls is ongoing. The Governor reported that this is a county government initiative to empower the youth and other low-income earners doing business around the stadium by giving them more decent structures.

143. The Governor further informed the Committee that the County Government is constructing a sports arena at the Del Monte area that will incorporate all sports fields, a sports academy and sports training facilities.

c) Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO)

144. THIWASCO was established in September 2009. It is solely owned by the County Government of Kiambu and is licensed by WASREB. The Committee was informed of the following:

- (i) THIWASCO serves over 410,000 residents across 354 km² covering Thika East, Thika West, Juja and Gatanga sub-counties, with 42,999 household connections in the municipality.
- (ii) The company draws water from Chania River (20,000 m³/day), Thika River (16,000 m³/day), and seven boreholes located at Kilimambogo, Witeithie-Kibute, Salama-Gatuanyaga, Matathia-Maguguni, Mary Hill, Ngoliba Catholic Church and Ngoliba Market.
- (iii) There are currently 18 storage tanks with a combined capacity of 29,446 m³, strategically distributed across the service area.
- (iv) The current water demand in Thika Municipality stands at 62,000 m³/day against a current supply of 43,000 m³/day, leaving a deficit of 19,000 m³/day. To bridge this gap, THIWASCO is implementing the last phase of the Thika 3A Dam, which is expected to boost the current supply by an additional 70,000 m³/day. The Karimenu Dam Bulk Supply works are also ongoing and are expected to boost supply by an additional 20,000 m³/day.
- (v) On sewerage services, the THIWASCO sewerage treatment plant at Kangoki has a capacity of 17,500 m³/day, with current treated volumes at 12,000 m³/day. The proposed Thika 3A Dam will expand sewerage treatment capacity by an additional 14,000 m³/day. New sewer network lines covering 36 km are also being laid.

d) Thika Fire Station

145. Thika Municipality Fire Station is a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week emergency-ready facility, manned by a work force of 40 trained personnel who respond to different incidents. The Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that the facility is equipped with modern firefighting equipment including:
- (a) One fire engine of 10,000-litre capacity.
 - (b) One fire engine of 5,000-litre capacity.

- (c) One pump truck.
- (d) One utility vehicle.
- (e) One command car.
- (f) One rescue van.
- (g) One backup water bowser.

146. The unit has specialized equipment for effective lifesaving, property protection and salvage operated by competent firefighters as follows;

- (a) Life detector unit, for detecting and locating persons in collapsed buildings.
- (b) Two sets of rope rescue equipment, for rescuing people in pits and high-rise buildings.
- (c) Two sets of extrication equipment, for rescuing persons trapped in traffic accidents.
- (d) Six sets of diving equipment, for underwater rescue. Theodolite light set, for determining the level of a collapsed building.
- (e) Laser set, for detecting tilting of a collapsed building and alerting rescuers.
- (f) Trauma bag, for providing medical care during emergencies.
- (g) Assorted break-in equipment, for gaining access during emergency operations.

147. The facility responds to different emergencies and special services including: Fire incidents; water rescue; flooding response; road traffic accidents; deep pit and high-rise rescue and recovery; hazardous materials incidents; general operations; suicide response and attempts; assisting other agencies in rescue operations; building collapse; and animal rescue.

e) Gatitu Road

148. Gatitu Road runs through Thika Town and serves as a major link road connecting to the Thika-Garissa Highway, the Thika Superhighway and Thika Town CBD. It handles most of the vehicles entering and exiting Thika CBD from the Thika Superhighway and the Garissa Road.

149. The Committee observed that the service lane on Gatitu Road has been completed. The Committee was further informed that an interchange dualling of the road is being planned by KeNHA.
150. In addition to the above, the Committee also visited Mama Ngina Peoples' Park and Rosary Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centre within Thika Municipality as part of the inspection.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE URBAN AREAS AND CITIES ACT

151. Following its consideration of the Report of the Adhoc Committee and submissions from all the stakeholders as well as the members of the public and having undertaken inspection visits within Thika Municipality, the Committee analysed the application against the procedural requirements under Section 8 and the substantive criteria for the classification of an urban area as a city under Section 5(1) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, and observed as follows.

3.1 Compliance with the procedural requirements under section 8

152. Section 8 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, prescribes procedural steps that must be undertaken in an application for the conferment of city status. The Committee examined steps followed by Thika Municipality and the County Government of Kiambu against the requirements of the Act, and notes the position as follows—

- (a) **Application by the Municipal Board (Section 8(1)).** The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee records that the Thika Municipal Board passed a resolution applying to the County Executive Committee of Kiambu County for the conferment of city status.
- (b) **Approval by the County Executive Committee (Section 8(2)).** The County Executive Committee of Kiambu County approved the application vide minute MIN/CEC/CS/VOL.1/169.
- (c) **Constitution of the Ad Hoc Committee (Section 8(3) and (4)).** The Governor of Kiambu County constituted an Ad Hoc Committee comprising professionals drawn from the institutions specified under the Act, including the Institution of Surveyors of Kenya, the Law Society of Kenya, the Architectural Association of Kenya, the Town and County Planners Association of Kenya, the Institution of Engineers of Kenya, and the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya, with regard

being had to the regional, ethnic, gender and disability diversity considerations contemplated under the Act.

(d) Assessment by the Ad Hoc Committee and recommendation to the Governor (Section 8(5) and (6)). The Ad Hoc Committee assessed compliance with the criteria under Section 5 and submitted its report to the Governor recommending the conferment of city status. The Governor in turn transmitted the recommendation to the County Assembly of Kiambu.

(e) Approval by the County Assembly (Section 8(7)). The County Assembly's Committee on County Planning and Urbanization considered the application, conducted public participation, and recommended approval. The County Assembly approved the conferment of city status on 19th June, 2025, and the Clerk of the County Assembly transmitted the resolution to the Senate vide letter dated 24th June, 2025.

153. **The Committee finds that the procedural requirements set out in Section 8 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, have been complied with.**

3.2 Compliance with the substantive criteria under section 5

154. Section 5(1) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275, sets out eight substantive criteria for the classification of an urban area as a city. The Committee has examined the position with respect to each of the criteria and observed as follows.

Criterion 1: Population threshold (Section 5(1)(a))

155. Section 5(1)(a) of the Act requires that the urban area must have a population of at least two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) residents according to the final gazetted results of the last population census carried out by an institution authorised under any written law preceding the application.

156. The County Government's submissions place the population of Thika Municipality at 279,429 residents, drawn from Volume I of the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Report (Table 2.6: Distribution of Population, Number of Households and Average Household Size by Sub-County), being the aggregate population of Thika East and Thika West Sub-Counties. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, in confirming the population to the Committee, placed the population at 284,727 residents (140,361 male, 144,344 female, and 22 intersex). Both figures exceed the statutory threshold of 250,000 residents. Further, on the basis of the 3.4 per cent annual growth rate adopted in the National Spatial Plan, Thika Municipality is projected to have a population of 482,919 residents by 2035 and 808,434 residents by 2039.
157. **The Committee finds that Thika Municipality satisfies the requirement under Section 5(1)(a) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275.**

Criterion 2: Integrated Urban Area or City Development Plan (Section 5(1)(b))

158. Section 5(1)(b) of the Act requires the urban area to have an integrated urban area or city development plan prepared in accordance with the Urban Areas and Cities Act and other relevant laws. Sections 36 to 42 and the Third Schedule of the Act prescribe the contents and procedural requirements of such a plan, including alignment with county development plans; a long-term vision identifying critical needs; a spatial development framework with land-use guidelines; operational and disaster management strategies; a three-year financial plan; and key performance indicators.
159. The County Government of Kiambu confirmed that Thika Municipality has a comprehensive Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan (ISUDP) covering the period 2015–2035, which was ratified and approved by both the County Executive Committee and the County Assembly of Kiambu. The ISUDP serves as the legal

framework for development control, land use, and capital investment within the Municipality. Though spanning the period 2015–2035, the Plan did envision the elevation of Thika Municipality to city status. It provides for the formulation of a long-term “city vision” for Thika, referred to future transport and infrastructure needs “of the city”, proposed intercity bus terminals and city bus parks to meet anticipated city-scale demand, and includes environmental management planning suited to sustained urban expansion. During the visioning and validation processes under the Plan, the County Government indicated that the participants articulated their aspirations for Thika’s transformation into an advanced urban centre, consistent with city status.

160. **The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has met the requirement under Section 5(1)(b) of the Act.**

Criterion 3: Capacity to generate sufficient revenue (Section 5(1)(c))

161. Section 5(1)(c) of the Act requires the urban area to have demonstrable capacity to generate sufficient revenue to sustain its operations. The Committee assessed this requirement by reference to the Municipality's ability to meet short-term financial obligations, cover budgeted expenses, sustain long-term financial commitments, finance the base-level services prescribed under the First Schedule, and demonstrate efficient mapping and collection of own-source revenue.
162. In order to verify the revenue performance of Thika Municipality, the Committee sought and obtained confirmation from the Office of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General verified that cumulative revenue collection for Thika Municipality over the seven financial years from 2018/2019 to 2024/2025 stood at KES 6,472,198,984. The Committee further notes that own-source revenue has shown a consistent upward trajectory, rising from KES 935,111,010 in FY 2022/2023 to KES 1,050,143,239 in FY 2023/2024 and KES 1,142,417,588 in FY 2024/2025.

163. The Committee observes that the County Government has attributed the growth in own-source revenue to the rollout of a comprehensive Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System, which has driven a 45% increase in county-wide own-source revenue from KES 4.5 billion in FY 2023/2024 to KES 5.45 billion in FY 2024/2025, with corresponding gains recorded for Thika Municipality.
164. The Committee had noted variances between some of the revenue figures initially presented in the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee and those verified by the Office of the Auditor-General. In its further submissions dated 9th June 2026, the County Government clarified that there is no disparity between the revenue information it submitted and the data verified by the Auditor-General. The County further explained that independent financial statements for Thika Municipality were not submitted for audit for Financial Years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 because the municipality's financial performance for those years had been consolidated within the audited County Executive financial statements, which was the prevailing practice at the time. The requirement for separate financial reporting by municipalities only became effective from Financial Year 2021/2022.
165. **The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has demonstrated a sustained and growing revenue base, and that the requirement under Section 5(1)(c) of the Act is met. The Committee observes that the County Government needs to ensure consistency in financial reporting on the affairs of the proposed City.**

Criterion 4: Demonstrable good system and records of prudent management (Section 5(1)(d))

166. Section 5(1)(d) of the Act requires the urban area to have demonstrable good system and records of prudent management. This criterion was construed in light of the

Public Finance Management Act, Cap 412A, the Public Audit Act, 2015, and the County Governments Act, Cap 265, which together emphasize reasonable and prudent use of public resources, effective service delivery, transparency, accountability, and proper record-keeping in the conduct of public affairs.

167. In assessing this criterion, the Committee considered that demonstrable good systems and records of prudent management would be evidenced by, among other things: consistent and timely preparation of separate municipal financial statements; clean or manageable audit opinions from the Auditor-General over a sustained period; robust internal controls and traceable financial records; evidence of corrective action on audit findings; and systems capable of supporting the higher standards of governance, accountability, and financial management expected of a city.
168. The County Government submitted that it has taken measures to strengthen management systems within Thika Municipality and the broader County. These include the deployment of a comprehensive Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System integrating revenue collection, hospital management, land management, and financial reporting functions, with a cashless, invoice-first architecture. The County also highlighted the operationalisation of the Kiambu County Health Services Facility Improvement Fund and partnerships with various institutions for technical support and capacity development. In response to the Committee's request for evidence of Memoranda of Understanding supporting these partnerships, the County confirmed the existence of MoUs with several institutions, including the Kenya Red Cross Society, JICA, KIRDI, JKUAT, and KEPSA, while noting engagements with AMREF Health Africa and UNICEF.
169. The Committee, however, notes that independent financial statements for Thika Municipality were not submitted for audit for the Financial Years 2018/2019, 2019/2020, and 2020/2021. The County Government explained that during this

period, the municipality's financial performance was consolidated within the audited financial statements of the County Executive, and that the requirement for separate financial reporting by municipalities only became effective from Financial Year 2021/2022, following a National Treasury Circular Ref. AG.4/16/3 Vol.II (66) dated 6th July 2022.

The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has made notable progress in strengthening its financial management systems, particularly through the rollout of the ERP system, and that the requirement under Section 5(1)(d) of the Act is substantially met.

Criterion 5: Capacity to deliver services and existence of First Schedule services (Section 5(1)(e))

170. Section 5(1)(e) of the Act prescribes a dual test: that the urban area has **demonstrable capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver its services to its residents**, and that it has **in existence the services provided in the First Schedule**. The First Schedule prescribes the basic services for cities, including, among others, health facilities; education and library services; water and sanitation; firefighting and disaster management; public transport infrastructure; markets; abattoirs; cemeteries and crematoria; ambulance services; storm-water drainage; museum services; and theatres.

171. The County Government's submissions, and the Committee's findings from its inspection visits, indicated that—

- (a) **Health services:** Thika Municipality has 202 health facilities across public, private and faith-based sectors. Thika Level 5 Hospital is a regional referral and teaching facility serving Kiambu, Murang'a, Machakos and Kitui counties, with a 300-bed capacity, an Intensive Care Unit, a Renal Unit with five dialysis machines, a Cancer Centre, an Eye Unit, an Advanced Radiology Department, a Dental and

Maxillofacial Unit, and specialised Reproductive Health and Neonatal Services Unit. The Hospital reports a maternal mortality rate of 5.1 per 100,000 live births, which is significantly lower than Kenya's national rate of 355 per 100,000 live births and well within the World Health Organization's global target of less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

- (b) **Ambulance and emergency services.** The County operates 15 fully equipped ambulances handling an average of 55 referrals weekly, supported by 24-hour Emergency Operations Centre coordinating responses to disease outbreaks, fires, floods, chemical spills, and mass casualty incidents. The Centre has the capability to track ambulances in real time, enabling efficient dispatch and response coordination.
- (c) **Firefighting and disaster management:** The Thika Fire Station operates on a 24-hour, 7-day basis with 40 trained personnel and is equipped with modern firefighting and specialised technical rescue assets. These include fire engines of 10,000-litre and 5,000-litre capacities, a pump truck, a rescue van, and a backup water bowser, as well as specialised equipment such as life detector units and laser/theodolite sets for collapsed structure search and rescue, rope rescue systems for high-angle and confined space operations, extrication tools for road traffic accidents, and diving equipment for water rescue. The station has capacity to respond to hazardous materials incidents and other complex emergencies. It serves Thika Municipality as well as Juja, Gatundu North, and Gatundu South Municipalities within Kiambu County as well as the neighbouring counties. The County has recorded improvements in emergency response times, conduct of fire safety audits, and training of fire officers. The fire and rescue services are integrated into the County's broader disaster management framework, which is aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and supported by a 24-hour Emergency Operations Centre
- (d) **Markets, education, cemeteries and crematoria, public transport, and recreation:** The Municipality is served by multiple markets, over 10 universities

and tertiary institutions, seven public cemeteries and crematoria facilities, the Thika Superhighway and railway line with plans for bus park upgrades, and upgraded recreational spaces including Mama Ngina Park.

172. The The Committee, further observed four specific matters requiring further attention and clear timelines:

- (a) **Airport or airstrip:** Thika Municipality does not currently possess an operational airport or airstrip. While plans are underway to develop one on land previously held by Del Monte, the Committee notes that Thika is located only approximately 40 kilometres from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), with direct high-quality road linkage via the Thika Superhighway and Eastern Bypass. This proximity significantly mitigates the immediate impact of the absence of a local airstrip.
- (b) **Theatre:** The two theatre and performance facilities cited by the County Government are privately owned and operated. The County therefore needs to provide clear plans for the development or securing of publicly accessible theatre or cultural performance spaces reflected in the Municipality's and the proposed City's planning documents, including the Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan.
- (c) **Museum:** A fully operational museum or interpretive centre has not yet been established. The Mugo wa Kiburu Shrine is under rehabilitation in collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya, and the Thika War Cemetery serves an important historical function. The County Government, in collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya, would be required to set out a clear plan and timeline for the establishment of a fully operational museum or interpretive centre within the proposed City.
- (d) **Water supply and sanitation:** The Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO) serves over 410,000 residents across 354 km² with 42,999 household connections. However, the current water demand of 62,000 m³ per day exceeds

supply of 43,000 m³ per day, resulting in a deficit of 19,000 m³ per day. THIWASCO is implementing the final phase of the Thika 3A Dam (expected to add 70,000 m³ per day) and the Karimenu Dam Bulk Supply works (expected to add a further 20,000 m³ per day). On sewerage, the Kang'oki treatment plant has a capacity of 17,500 m³ per day against current treated volumes of 12,000 m³ per day, with expansion plans underway.

173. **The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has, in substantial measure, the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver services to its residents and has in existence the bulk of the services prescribed under the First Schedule, and that the criterion under Section 5(1)(e) of the Act is met.**

Criterion 6: Institutionalised active participation by residents (Section 5(1)(f))

174. Section 5(1)(f) of the Act requires the urban area to have institutionalised active participation by its residents in the management of its affairs. This criterion is construed in light of Article 174 of the Constitution, which entrenches participation by the people in the exercise of devolved powers, and Article 196, which obligates county assemblies to facilitate public participation and involvement in their legislative and other activities.
175. The Committee notes that public participation is institutionalised in Thika Municipality through the County Governments Act, Cap 265, the Urban Areas and Cities Act, and the Kiambu County Public Participation Act, 2014. The Municipality has established structures for citizen engagement, including ward-level development committees, public barazas, and stakeholder forums.
176. In addition to the existing institutional framework, the Committee conducted its own public participation exercise as part of the inquiry into the application for conferment of city status. The Committee received memoranda and oral submissions from a wide range of stakeholders during the public hearing held on 8th April 2026. These included the National Land Commission, the Speaker of the County Assembly of Murang'a (appearing on behalf of the Governor of Murang'a County),

representatives of the four wards within Thika Municipality, residents' associations, traders' and industrialists' associations, boda boda groups, youth organisations, community-based organisations, and other members of the public, as more particularly set out in section 2.9 of Chapter Two of this Report.

177. A majority of the participants who made submissions during the public participation exercise expressed support for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality. The Committee notes that only two objections were received during the exercise.

The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has institutionalised active participation by its residents in the management of its affairs and that the requirement under Section 5(1)(f) of the Act is met.

Criterion 7: Infrastructural facilities and disaster management capacity (Section 5(1)(g))

178. Section 5(1)(g) of the Act requires the urban area to have infrastructural facilities, including but not limited to roads, street lighting, markets and fire stations, and an adequate capacity for disaster management.
179. The Committee notes that Thika Municipality is well served by major trunk roads, including the Thika Superhighway, which provides strong connectivity to Nairobi and other parts of the region. Within the Municipality, the County Government has invested in the expansion and rehabilitation of urban roads as well as the installation of street lighting. In particular, under the Angaza Kiambu initiative, the Municipality has benefited from the installation of solar-powered street lights and flood masts, improving safety and security in various parts of the urban area.
180. With regard to disaster management, the Committee observes that this matter has been addressed in detail under Criterion 5. The Municipality benefits from a 24-hour Emergency Operations Centre and a fire station with capacity to respond to a range of emergencies, in line with the County's broader disaster management framework aligned to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has the requisite infrastructural facilities and adequate capacity for disaster management and has the potential for expansion, and that the requirement under Section 5(1)(g) of the Act is met.

Criterion 8: Capacity for functional and effective waste disposal (Section 5(1)(h))

181. Section 5(1)(h) of the Act requires the urban area to have the capacity for functional and effective waste disposal, including collection, transportation, processing or recycling, and disposal, aligned with the National Solid Waste Management Strategy.
182. The Committee notes that solid waste management in Thika Municipality is anchored on the Kang'oki disposal site, a 126-acre facility in Kamenu Ward that has served the Municipality and the wider Kiambu County since 2018. The site receives between 1,200 and 1,500 tonnes of commingled waste daily and supports a livelihood ecosystem of over 800 waste pickers. The County Government has initiated the transition from open dumping to a sanitary engineered landfill using the Fukuoka Semi-Aerobic Landfill Technology, in line with international best practice.
183. The Committee further notes the County's plans to modernise waste management through the deployment of IoT-enabled smart bins with fill-level sensors, GIS-based route optimisation, and the eventual introduction of AI and robotics for waste sorting. These initiatives are intended to improve collection efficiency, traceability, and accountability in the waste value chain. The County has also outlined plans for the restoration and landscaping of the Chania and Thika Rivers, including the development of riparian green corridors and strengthened ecological buffers.

The Committee finds that Thika Municipality has the capacity for functional and effective waste disposal contemplated under Section 5(1)(h) of the Act, and that this criterion is met.

CHAPTER FOUR: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

184. The Committee observes that the application by the County Government of Kiambu for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality was comprehensive and well-supported by documentation, stakeholder engagement, and physical verification, and further notes the strong expression of support from a wide cross-section of stakeholders during the public participation process.
185. The Committee observes that Thika Municipality has demonstrated notable progress in strengthening its institutional, financial, and infrastructural foundations, and that the conferment of city status presents an opportunity to consolidate these gains and accelerate improvements in service delivery and urban governance.
186. The Committee observes that the County Government has undertaken to fully operationalise the public theatre and the museum or interpretive centre, and to modernise solid waste management within the proposed City through the transition of the Kang'oki site to a sanitary engineered landfill and the adoption of smart technologies.
187. The Committee observes that residents, in the course of the public participation process, raised matters relating to road networks within residential estates, drainage systems, flood mitigation, water supply coverage, and solid waste management, which the County Government has undertaken to progressively address as part of the transition to city status.
188. The Committee observes that the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality will provide an important platform for accelerated development, improved service delivery, and enhanced local economic growth, anchored on sustained commitment to good governance, prudent financial management, and responsive urban planning.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee, having considered the application by the County Government of Kiambu for the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, and having analysed the same against the criteria set out under Section 5 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, makes the following recommendations:

- (a) **THAT** the Senate **approves** the conferment of city status to Thika Municipality, and the resolution of the Senate be transmitted to the President for the issuance of a Charter pursuant to section 7 of the Urban Areas and Cities Act, Cap 275.
- (b) **THAT**, noting the undertakings given by the County Government of Kiambu in the course of the Committee's inquiry to fully operationalise the facilities and services within the proposed City, the Governor of Kiambu County submits to the Senate, within ninety (90) days of the conferment of city status, workplans for the following—
 - (iv) the full operationalisation of the public theatre and the museum or interpretive centre;
 - (v) the enhancement of infrastructure and services within the residential estates, including road networks, drainage systems, flood mitigation, water supply coverage, and solid waste management, in line with the matters raised by residents during the public participation process; and
 - (vi) the transition to a Smart Waste Management framework, including the full operationalisation of the Kang'oki sanitary engineered landfill.

PICTORIALS



Picture 1: The Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations pays Kiambu Governor Kimani Wamatangi a courtesy visit ahead of the public hearing.



Picture 2: Senator Catherine Mumma, the Vice Chairperson of the Committee, addresses Thika Residents during the public hearing.



Picture 3: The Members of the Committee inspect the Thika Sub-County Fire Station.



Picture 4: A Thika resident submits his views on the Thika City Status Bid before the Committee.

Picture 6: A member of staff at the Thika Level V Hospital answers senators' questions during their inspection of the facility.



Picture 5: Thika residents come out in large numbers to present their views on the application to make the Thika Municipality a City.





Picture 7: The Committee inspects the ongoing construction of the Thika Stadium.



Picture 8: Members of the Devolution Committee deliberate after inspecting the Mama Ngina People's Park in Thika Town.



Picture 9: Senators interact with a teacher at the Rosary ECDE Center during their inspection visit of the school.



Picture 10: Members of the Committee inspecting Thika Water and Sewerage Company (THIWASCO)

ANNEXURES

Annex 1	Minutes of the Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations
Annex 2	The Report of the AdHoc Committee on Application for Conferment of city status to Thika Municipality
Annex 3	Advertisement published in the Standard Newspaper on 13 th March, 2026, <i>(invitation to the public to submit memoranda and attend public hearing)</i>
Annex 4	Matrix of the stakeholder submissions on the matter.
Annex 5	Copies of stakeholder submissions