

Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Monthly Activity Report

Date: 31st May 2024

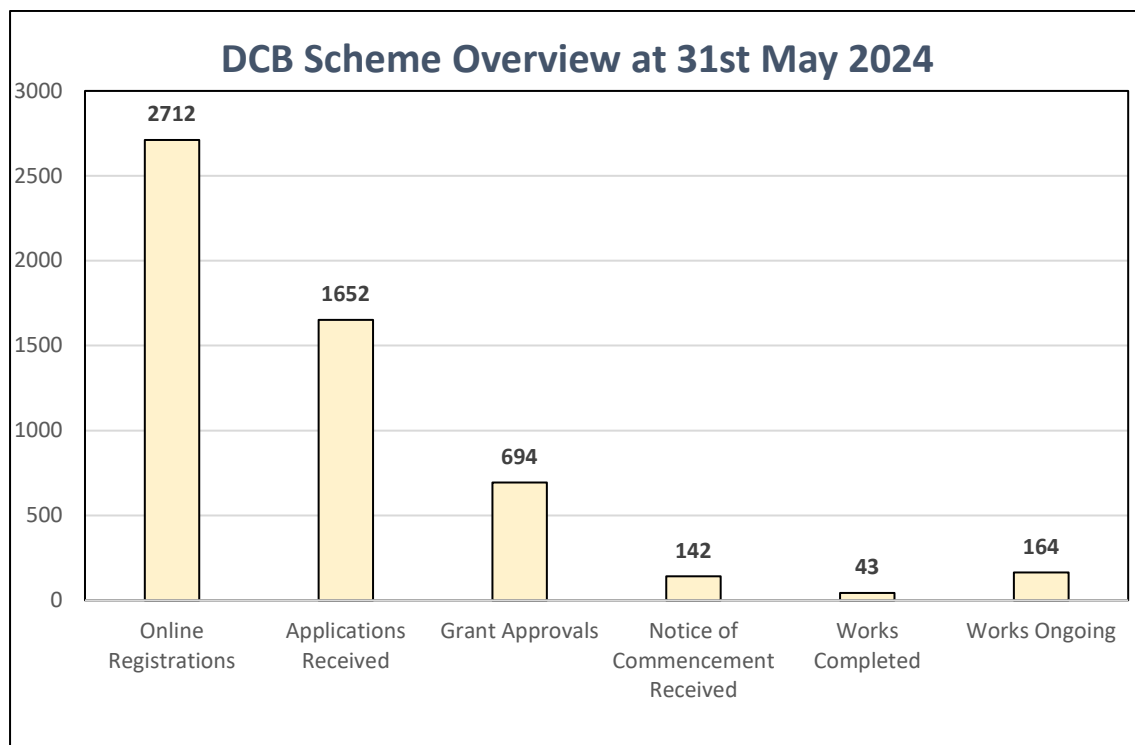
Background

The Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage announced the commencement of the Enhanced Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme on the 3rd July 2023 under the Remediation of Dwellings Damaged by the Use of Defective Concrete Blocks Act 2022.

Donegal County Council is tasked with administering the Enhanced Grant Scheme, on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Enhanced Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme and covers the period up to and including 31st May 2024.

At the commencement date, Donegal County Council had 1,296 applications received under the Previous Scheme which required transitioning to the Enhanced Scheme. These applications are referred to as “Transitional Applications”.



Section 1

1.1: Status of Transitional Applications as at 31st May 2024

Transitional Applications at 3rd July 2023	849
Declaration of Floor Area received from Applicants for Grant Calculations to date under the Enhanced Scheme	483
Grant Amount Calculated under Enhanced Scheme and notified to applicant	471
Declarations reviewed by Donegal Co Co and returned to applicant	1
Percentage of Applications reviewed to date by Donegal County Council	97%
Value of Grant Amounts under the Enhanced Scheme	€155,539,610

1.2 Analysis of Transitional Applications by Approved Remediation Option:

Stage 1 – Confirmation of Eligibility & Remediation Option under the Previous Scheme	849
Option 1	527
Option 2 – 5 and Blended Options	322

Key Points:

- For the 849 Transitional Applications which received Confirmation of Eligibility and Remediation Option by Donegal County Council under the provisions of the Previous Scheme, 62% of applicants were approved for Option 1.
- 57% of all approved applicants have now submitted the required information (Declaration of Floor Area, dimensioned drawings) to enable Grant Calculation by Donegal County Council.
- To date 97% of all submitted Declarations have been processed or returned to the applicant for follow up.
- The Grant Calculations under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme for Transitional Applications are ongoing with additional resources allocated.

Section 2 - Referral of Applications to the Housing Agency

Under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme, the technical assessment of validated applications is the remit of the Housing Agency. The initial step for an application, following validation and referral to the Housing Agency, is the Housing Agency's Determination of Damage Threshold of the relevant dwelling.

The average timescale for Determination of Damage Threshold by the Housing Agency is 60 days.

For applications that meet the Damage Threshold, the Housing Agency provides an indicative timeline for determination of the Remediation Option & Grant Amount. The Determination of Damage Threshold and the Remediation Option Grant as decided by the Housing Agency is communicated to the applicant by the Council's DCB Grant Office.

Where it is deemed by the Housing Agency that an application has not met the Damage Threshold or where an applicant is not satisfied with the Approved Remediation Option, the applicant may submit an Appeal to the Independent Appeals Panel.

Overview of Referral of Applications to the Housing Agency

2.1 Determination of Damage Threshold as at 31st May 2024

Applications Validated by Donegal County Council & Referred to the Housing Agency for Determination on Damage Threshold	658
Determination on Damage Threshold received from the Housing Agency and communicated to applicant by Donegal County Council	585
Awaiting Determination from the Housing Agency	73
Determination by Housing Agency – Dwelling Meets the Damage Threshold	570
Determination by Housing Agency – Dwelling did not meet the Damage Threshold	15

To date, **97%** of applications assessed by the Housing Agency have been determined to meet the Damage Threshold.

2.2 Remediation Option & Grant Amount as at 31st May 2024

To date, the Housing Agency have decided the Remedial Option Grant on **66%** of the applications which have been determined to have met the Damage Threshold under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme. These Options are summarised below:

Remediation Option Grant Determined by the Housing Agency	223
Remediation Option Grant Refusal by the Housing Agency	1
Option 1	147
Option 2	36
Option 3	19
Option 4	6
Blended Option or Combination	15
Value of Grant Amounts decided by the Housing Agency	€74,770,280

Section 3 - Payments Processed since the introduction of the Enhanced Scheme

Table 3 provides an overview of Payments issued to applicants since the introduction of the Enhanced Grant Scheme in July 2023.

The Payments represent reimbursement of Professional Fees and costs associated with approved remediation works.

3.1: Payments Processed since the Introduction of the Enhanced Scheme

Month	Value	No. of Applicants receiving Payment*
July 2023	€586,164	23
August 2023	€697,993	17
September 2023	€828,753	15
October 2023	€928,006	9
November 2023	€857,790	14
December 2023	€2,165,626	28
January 2024	€218,861	6
February 2024	€1,113,658	17
March 2024	€1,545,774	22
April 2024	€2,730,416	47
May 2024	€5,256,002	138

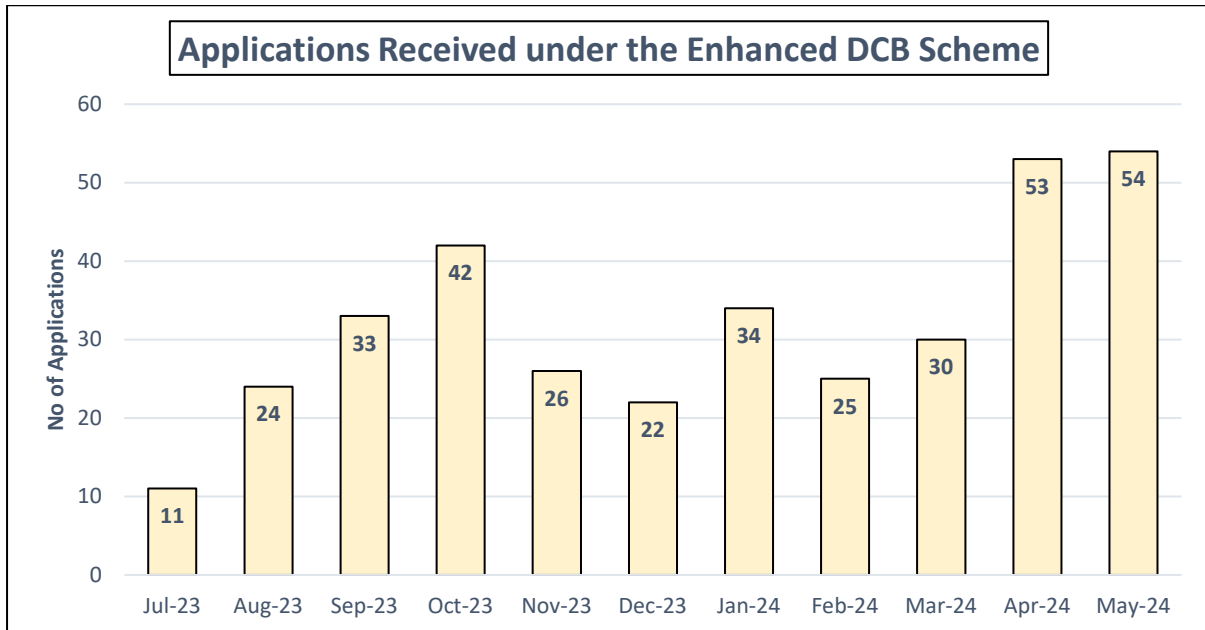
Remediation Works	€22,850,503
Ancillary Grant	€888,280
Competent Building Professional / Engineer Report Fees	€6,108,209
Professional Fees (Remedial Works Plan, Health & Safety)	€945,601
Total Value of Grants Paid to Date (Previous Scheme and Enhanced Scheme)	€30,792,593

*Payments are issued in Stages; therefore, a number of applicants will have received Payments across more than one month listed above.

1,176 no. applicants have received a reimbursement of Competent Building Professional (CBP) / Engineer Report Fees. Where homeowners have been refunded at 90% of their outlay on CBP/Engineers Report Fees under the provisions of the Previous Scheme, the Council's DCB Grant Office are processing the remaining 10% Engineers Fees balance, on receipt of a subsequent Payment Claim.

Section 4 - Overview of Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme

4.1: Overview of Applications received under the Enhanced DCB Scheme



4.2: Validation Work Programme as at 31st May 2024

Application Status	No.
Applications Received under the Provisions of the Enhanced Scheme	356
Applications assessed and transferred to Housing Agency	233
Applications Withdrawn by Applicant	4
Applications deemed ineligible	3
Incomplete Applications - returned to applicant for follow-up	65
Applications currently being reviewed by Donegal County Council	51

The applications received under the Enhanced Grant Scheme can be categorised as follows:

- Principal Private Residence (PPR) - 330
- Residential Tenancy Board (RTB) - 26

4.3 Remediation Option & Grant Amount as at 31st May 2024

This table outlines the decided Remediation Option Grants which have been notified to approved applicants by the DCB Grant Office.

Total No. of Grant Amounts decided to date (Previous Scheme & Enhanced Scheme)	694
Total Value of Grant Amounts decided to date (Previous Scheme & Enhanced Scheme)	€230,309,890
No. of Confirmation of Grant Amounts from the Previous Scheme as calculated / recalculated under the Enhanced Scheme by Donegal County Council (Transitional Applications)	471
Value of Grant Amounts from the Previous Scheme as calculated / recalculated under the Enhanced Scheme by Donegal County Council	€155,539,610
Number of Confirmation of Grant Amounts received from the Housing Agency under the terms of the Enhanced Scheme	223
Value of Grant Amounts decided by the Housing Agency	€74,770,280

Assistance to Applicants

The DCB Grant Office continues to actively engage with applicants across the full scope of the Scheme. This includes Validation of Enhanced Scheme Applications, Ancillary Grant Applications, Notification of Decisions, Validation of Payment Claims, Processing Payments, Change of Competent Building Professional and all other general queries.

The DCB Section of Donegal County Council's Website is updated regularly and contains all the information and links that an applicant may require at various stages of the application process.

The telephone clinics are available every Tuesday and Thursday (9am – 12.30pm) to assist applicant with any queries and the DCB Grant Office Team follow up on applicants' queries outside of the specific telephone clinics.

Applicants can also submit queries via email to dcb@donegalcoco.ie and a member of the team will be in contact with the applicant.

The Community Facilitators have a role in supporting and guiding the Homeowner through the Application Process and facilitating access to relevant support services. Given the demand on the service, the work of the Community Facilitators aims to prioritise homeowners and families who are most vulnerable and / or applicants who may not have the necessary facilities to submit an online application.

4.4 Notice of Commencement & Remediation Works

Notice of Commencement submitted by Applicants to the DCB Grant Office	142
No. of Dwellings currently undertaking Remediation Works*	164
No. of Dwellings Fully Remediated*	43

Under the Remediation of Dwellings Damaged by the Use of Defective Concrete Blocks Act 2022, applicants are required to submit their Notice of Commencement of their Remedial Works to the Council. This facility is available to approved applicants through their Online Portal and in accordance with the Act, Notices of Commencement must be submitted not more than 14 days prior to commencement of their remedial works and not less than 7 days prior to the commencement of remedial works.

*Note: Applications approved under the Previous Scheme which had commenced Remediation Works prior to the implementation of the Enhanced Scheme at 3rd July 2023 were not required to submit a Notice of Commencement of Works to Donegal County Council.

4.5 Summary of Remediation Options

The Remediation Options under the Enhanced Grant Scheme are outlined in the Table below.

Remedial Option	Remedial Works Description
Option 1	Demolish entire dwelling and rebuild (in the exact position on the land on which the relevant dwelling was situated before it was demolished)
Option 2	Demolish and rebuild external walls (both outer and inner leafs) down to foundation on a phased basis and re-render
Option 3	Demolish and rebuild external walls (both outer and internal leafs) down to top of rising wall on a phased basis and re-render
Option 4	Demolish and rebuild external walls (outer leaf only) down to top of rising wall on a phased basis and re-render
Option 5	Demolish and rebuild outer leaf of affected walls only and re-render

Report prepared on: 12th June 2024

DCB Grant Office