

Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Monthly Report to Elected Members

Date: 31st January 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.

Donegal County Council is tasked with administering the Enhanced 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 January 2024.

At the commencement date, Donegal County Council had 1,296 applications received under the Previous Scheme which required transitioning to the Enhanced Scheme.

Overview of Approved Remediation Options under the Enhanced Scheme

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

Status of Transitional Applications

Of the 1,296 applications received, 849 applications were approved by Donegal County Council under the Previous Scheme.

The current status of these 849 applications is outlined in Table 1.

This table also provides detail on the Grant Calculations / Recalculations completed to date by Donegal County Council under the terms of the Enhanced Scheme, where applicants have submitted the required documentation.

Referral of Applications to the Housing Agency

Under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme, Donegal County Council has an administrative role. 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.

For those 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 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.

Further detail is contained within the Tables under Section 2 of this report.

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.

Overview of Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the number of applications received by Donegal County Council since the commencement of the Enhanced Scheme.

Tables 4.2 provides an overview on the Enhanced Scheme including applications from the Previous Scheme which are subject to transitional arrangements.

Table 4.3 provides an overview of Remediation Option Grants decided to date.

Assistance to Applicants

The DCB Grant Office continues to actively engage with applicants across the full scope of the Scheme including in respect of Validation of Applications, 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 Monthly Activity Reports are also included on the website.

The telephone clinics are available to applicants 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.

In addition, both Community Facilitators continue to provide assistance and support to applicants in their respective geographical areas. This is a welcome resource for applicants in their communities. The DCB Office meet with the Facilitators on a monthly basis to discuss emerging issues.

Donegal County Council continues to contribute to the Enhanced Scheme National Implementation Steering Group. This Group provides a forum for the discussion of emerging issues with the key stakeholders ensuring a consistent approach across all Designated Local Authorities on the rollout of the Enhanced Scheme.

The Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage is currently preparing a Six Month Progress Report on the rollout and implementation of the Enhanced Scheme across the four current Designated Local Authorities and it is expected that this report will be published shortly.

Section 1

Table 1: Status of Transitional Applications as at 31st January 2024

Categorisation and Priority	Applicants per Category at <u>3rd July 2023</u>	Information Received from Applicants for Grant Calculations to date	Information Reviewed by Donegal Co Co and returned to applicant for follow up	Grant Amount Calculated under Enhanced Scheme and notified to applicant	Percentage of Applications Processed or returned to applicant for follow up	Value of Grant Amounts under the Enhanced Scheme
1A	40	35	3	30	94%	€6,995,443
1B	39	36	3	31	94%	€10,359,373
2	9	8	1	7	100%	€2,160,114
3	58	54	0	52	96%	€15,589,863
4	668	246	47	144	78%	€48,899,248
Change of Remedial Option	35					
Totals	849	379	54	264	84%	€84,004,041

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	322

- For the 849 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.
- 45% of all approved applicants have submitted the required information to allow Grant Calculation by Donegal County Council.
- To date 84% of Grant Calculations have been processed or returned to the applicant for follow up.
- The Grant Calculations are ongoing with required resources allocated. This important aspect of the Scheme will be kept under review.

Explanation of Categories at 3rd July 2023:

Category 1A - Remediation Works fully Completed

Category 1B - Remediation Works In Progress

Category 2 - Grant Amount notified to applicant but works had not commenced at 03.07.2023

Category 3 - Stage 2 documentation submitted, but Grant Amount not calculated at 03.07.2023

Category 4 – Applicant notified of Stage 1 Confirmation of Eligibility & Remedial Option

Section 2: Referral of Applications to the Housing Agency as at 31st Jan 2024

2.1 Determination of Damage Threshold

Applications Validated by Donegal County Council & Referred to the Housing Agency for Determination on Damage Threshold	498
Determination on Damage Threshold received from the Housing Agency and communicated to applicant by Donegal County Council	457
Determination by Housing Agency – Dwelling Meets the Damage Threshold	447
Determination by Housing Agency – Dwelling did not meet the Damage Threshold	10
Awaiting Determination from the Housing Agency	41

To date, **97.8%** of applications assessed by the Housing Agency have been determined to meet the Damage Threshold.

2.2 Remediation Option & Grant Amount

To date, the Housing Agency have decided the Remedial Option Grant on **22.6%** of the applications which have been determined to have met the Damage Threshold under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme.

Remediation Option Grant Determined by the Housing Agency	101
Option 1	74
Option 2	19
Option 3	1
Option 4	4
Blended Option or Combination	3
Value of Grant Amounts decided by the Housing Agency	€35,667,165

Section 3

Table 3: 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

Total Value of Grants Paid to Date (Previous Scheme and Enhanced Scheme)	€20,146,743
---	--------------------

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

Section 4

Figure 4.1: Overview of Applications received under the Enhanced DCB Scheme

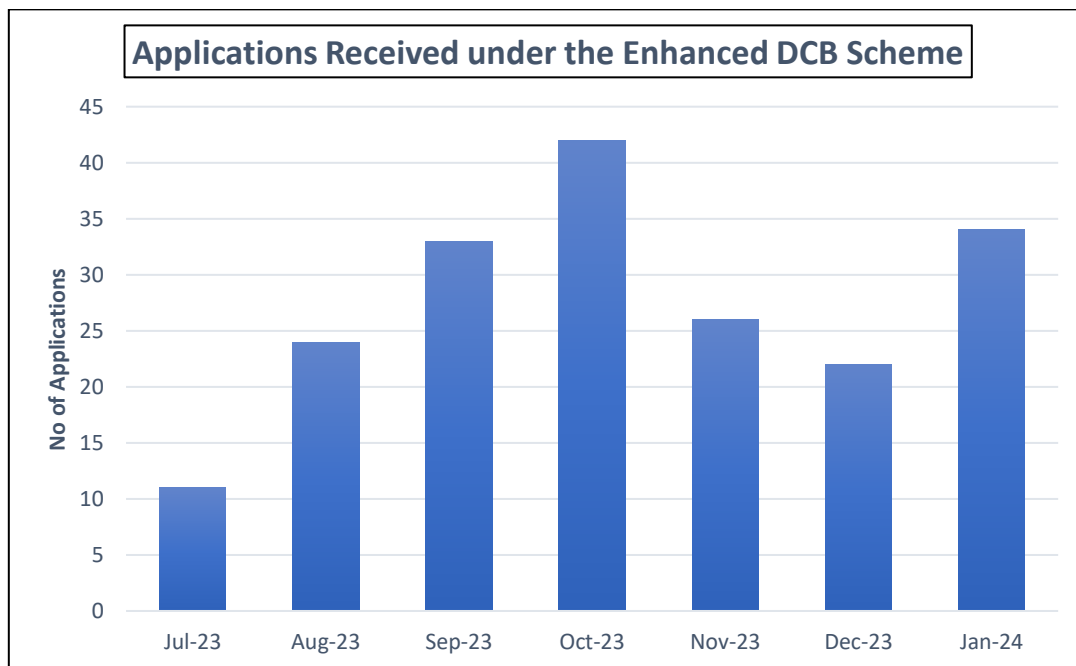


Table 4.2: Overview of Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme as at 31st Jan 2024

	Previous Scheme	Enhanced Scheme	Total
Applications submitted under Previous Scheme & remaining to be validated at the commencement of the Enhanced Scheme	122	N/A	122
Applications received under the Enhanced Scheme	N/A	192	192*
Total Applications under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme			314
Applications transferred or pending transfer to Housing Agency	86	112	198
Applications Withdrawn by Applicant	3	0	3
Applications deemed ineligible under the terms of the ES	3	0	3
Applications deemed incomplete and currently with applicant	9	10	19
Applications currently being reviewed by Donegal Co Council	21	70	91

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

Principal Private Residence (PPR) - 179

Residential Tenancy Board (RTB) - 13

Table 4.3 Remediation Option & Grant Amount

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)	365
Total Value of Grant Amounts decided to date (Previous Scheme & Enhanced Scheme)	€119,671,206
No. of Confirmation of Grant Amounts from the Previous Scheme as calculated / recalculated under the Enhanced Scheme by Donegal County Council (Transitional Applications)	264
Value of Grant Amounts from the Previous Scheme as calculated / recalculated under the Enhanced Scheme by Donegal County Council	€84,004,041
Number of Confirmation of Grant Amounts received from the Housing Agency under the terms of the Enhanced Scheme	101
Value of Grant Amounts decided by the Housing Agency	€35,667,165

Table 4.4 Notice of Commencement & Remediation Works

Under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme, applicants are required to submit a Notice of Commencement of Works to the DCB Grant Office not more than 14 days and not less than 7 days before the commencement of the works.

Notice of Commencement submitted by Applicants to the DCB Grant Office	48
No. of Dwellings currently undertaking Remediation Works*	70
No. of Dwellings Fully Remediated*	43

*Note: Applications approved under the Previous Scheme and 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.

Figure 4.5 Notice of Commencement & Remediation Works

