

**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Administrative Guidelines for Donegal and Mayo County Councils

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DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS GRANT SCHEME

1. General

- 1.1 The Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme is a grant scheme of financial assistance to support affected homeowner(s) to remediate their dwelling, where their dwelling has been damaged by the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction.
- 1.2 The grant scheme is a scheme of last resort for affected homeowners in County Donegal and County Mayo, who have no other practical options to remediate their dwellings.
- 1.3 The grant scheme will be operated and administered by Donegal and Mayo County Councils.
- 1.4 *S.I. No. 25 of 2020 - Dwellings Damaged by the Use of Defective Concrete Blocks in Construction (Remediation) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020* provides the legal framework for this grant scheme of financial assistance to support affected homeowners (see following link: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2020/si/25/made/en/print>).

2. Administrative Guidelines

- 2.1 The purpose of these administrative guidelines is to promote and support a consistent approach to the operation and administration of the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme by the relevant local authorities.
- 2.2 *S.I. No.25 of 2020* provides that certain items shall be “*in such form as the Minister may specify*” in guidelines, issued under section 5 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 to the relevant local authorities. Items as specified in *S.I. No. 25 of 2020* are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Items provided for in S.I. No. 25 of 2020			
Item	Reference	Description of Item	Administrative Guidelines Reference
Interpretation			
1.	Regulation 3	Certificate of remediation	Section 22 and Appendix P
Engineer's Report			
2.	Regulation 6(b)	Recommendation by the competent engineer who prepared the final report	Section 6
Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility			
3.	Regulation 8(2)	Confirmation of Eligibility application form	Section 12 and Appendix A
4.	Regulation 8(2)(b)	Proof of relevant dwelling	Section 5
5.	Regulation 8(2)(c)	Proof of relevant owner	Section 8
6.	Regulation 8(2)(f)	Consent to inspections	Section 13
7.	Regulation 8(2)(g)	Consent of joint owner(s) for the relevant dwelling to be included in the scheme	Section 14
8.	Regulation 8(2)(h)(i)	Declaration by applicant that no payment otherwise than under these Regulations has been made to or for the benefit of the applicant.	Section 12

9.	Regulation 8(2)(h)(ii)	Declaration by applicant that a payment has been made to or for the benefit of the eligible applicant and the amount of the payment	Section 12
Stage 2: Grant Approval			
10.	Regulation 9(2)	Grant approval application form	Section 16 and Appendix B
11.	Regulation 9(2)(c)	Proof of relevant dwelling	Section 5
12.	Regulation 9(2)(d)	Proof of relevant owner	Section 8
13.	Regulation 9(2)(j)	Written confirmation of the amount of the payment made to the eligible applicant for the engineer's report	Section 16 and Appendix B
14.	Regulation 9(2)(m)(i)	Declaration by the eligible applicant that no payment otherwise than under these Regulations has been made to or for the benefit of the applicant	Section 16
15.	Regulation 9(2)(m)(ii)	Declaration by the eligible applicant that a payment has been made to or for the benefit of the eligible applicant and the amount of the payment	Section 16
Stage 3: Payment of Grant			
16.	Regulation 10(2)	Payment of grant application form	Section 17 and Appendix C
17.	Regulation 10(2)(a)	Proof of relevant dwelling	Section 5
18.	Regulation 10(2)(b)	Proof of relevant owner	Section 8

19.	Regulation 10(2)(e)(i)	Declaration by scheme participant that no payment otherwise than under these Regulations has been made to or for the benefit of the scheme participant	Section 17 and Appendix C
20.	Regulation 10(2)(e)(ii)	Declaration by scheme participant that a payment has been made to or for the benefit of the scheme participant and the amount of the payment	Section 17
21.	Regulation 10(2)(h)	Written confirmation of the amount of the payment made to the scheme participant for the engineer's report	Section 17
Change of Applicant Consents			
22.	Regulation 12(2)(c)	Written consent by individual (change of applicant) to inspections	Section 21
23.	Regulation 12(2)(d)	Written consent by joint owner(s) to the individual (change of applicant) being considered as the applicant, eligible applicant or scheme participant, as the case may be	Section 21

2.3 Other items provided for in *S.I. No. 25 of 2020*, and included in these guidelines are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Other Items provided for in S.I. No. 25 of 2020			
Item	Reference	Description of Item	Administrative Guidelines Reference
Decisions by the relevant Local Authority			
24.	Regulation 8(10)(a)	Decision to issue Confirmation of Eligibility	Section 12 and Appendix E
25.	Regulation 8(10)(b)	Decision not to issue Confirmation of Eligibility	Section 12 and Appendix F
26.	Regulation 9(8)	Decision to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval	Section 16 and Appendix G
27.	Regulation 9(11)	Decision not to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval	Section 16 and Appendix H
28.	Regulation 10(7)	Decision to approve Application for Payment	Section 17 and Appendix J
29.	Regulation 10(11)	Decision not to approve Application for Payment	Section 17 and Appendix K
Change in circumstances that affects an application previously submitted			
30.	Regulation 8(6)	Notification of change in circumstances that affects an Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility	Section 19 and Appendix D
31.	Regulation 9(5)	Notification of change in circumstances that affects an Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval	Section 19 and Appendix D

32.	Regulation 10(4)	Notification of change in circumstances that affects an Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant	Section 19 and Appendix D
Refund of Compensation			
33.	Regulation 11(1)	Notification of non-scheme payment received	Section 20 and Appendix L
34.	Regulation 11(2)	Notice of refund of compensation	Section 20 and Appendix M
Change of Applicant			
35.	Regulation 12(2)(a)	Notification of Change of Applicant form	Section 21 and Appendix N
36.	Regulation 12(3)	Notification of Acceptance of Change of Applicant	Section 21 and Appendix O

3. Overview of Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

- 3.1 The Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme is a grant scheme of financial assistance to support affected homeowner(s) to remediate their dwelling, where their dwelling has been damaged by the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction.
- 3.2 The grant scheme applies to the **owners of dwellings** (located in Donegal or Mayo), which are damaged due to defective concrete blocks containing excessive amounts of deleterious materials namely mica or pyrite.
- 3.3 Under this grant scheme an **owner** can only apply for one **dwelling** and a **dwelling** can only be the subject of one grant (**one owner, one dwelling – one dwelling, one grant**).
- 3.4 The **dwelling** must be the individual's principal private residence.
- 3.5 An engineer's report in accordance with I.S. 465:2018 (and any amendment thereof), is required to demonstrate that the relevant dwelling has been damaged. This report must be carried out by a competent engineer who is listed on the I.S. 465:2018 register established by Engineers Ireland, which is available at:
<https://www.engineersireland.ie/Registers-and-Panels/10>
- 3.6 The register lists chartered engineers, who have the necessary direct professional experience, competence and specialist training in accordance with the requirements set out in '*I.S. 465:2018 - Assessment, testing and categorisation of damaged buildings incorporating concrete blocks containing certain deleterious materials*'.
- 3.7 This grant scheme covers up to 90% of the costs associated with the qualifying works deemed necessary for the remediation of the relevant dwelling (subject to maximum limits), and includes the costs associated with the:

- a) engineer's report;
- b) preparation of remedial works plan¹ by a competent engineer;
- c) contractor carrying out the remedial works;
- d) professional oversight of the remedial works, including inspection and certification.

3.8 The maximum grant payable for each remedial option is 90% of the maximum approved cost, or 90% of the actual cost of the qualifying works carried out, whichever is the lesser (see Table 3 below).

3.9 As the remedial works progress, the homeowner will be eligible to apply for grant payments in stages.

Table 3 Grant Amount Payable per Remedial Option			
Remedial Option	Remedial Option Description	Maximum Approved Cost¹	Maximum Grant Payable^{1,2}
Option 1	Demolish entire dwelling to foundation level and rebuild.	€275,000	€247,500
Option 2	Demolish and rebuild external walls (both outer and inner leafs) down to foundation on a phased basis and re-render.	€220,000	€198,000
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.	€210,000	€189,000
Option 4	Demolish and rebuild external walls (outer leaf only) down to top of rising wall on a phased basis and re-render.	€75,000	€67,500
Option 5	Demolish and rebuild outer leaf of affected walls only and re-render.	€55,000	€49,500
NOTE:			
1. All costs are inclusive of VAT.			
2. Not to exceed 90% of the maximum approved cost or, 90% of actual cost of the qualifying works, whichever is the lesser.			

¹ See Appendix Q for remedial works plan

3.10 There are three stages to this grant scheme (see below).

Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility

- Homeowner applies to the local authority by completing the application form for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility together with providing an engineer's report (from an engineer on the I.S. 465 Register), as evidence of damage to the dwelling.
- If satisfied, the local authority confirms eligibility to proceed to Stage 2: Grant Approval, subject to the terms of the scheme.

Stage 2: Grant Approval

- Before remedial works commence, the homeowner applies for grant approval by completing the application form for Stage 2: Grant Approval and providing estimated costs from a contractor to remediate the dwelling.
- If satisfied, the local authority confirms the maximum approved grant amount, subject to the terms of the scheme.

Stage 3: Payment of Grant

- Following completion and certification of the works, the homeowner applies for full or partial payment of the grant approved at Stage 2 by completing the application form for Stage 3: Payment of Grant.
- If satisfied, the local authority pays the grant to the homeowner, subject to the terms of the scheme.

4. Relevant dwelling

4.1 The applicant must be a 'relevant owner' of a '**relevant dwelling**' in a relevant local authority area.

4.2 The **relevant dwelling** must be a house, apartment, maisonette or duplex dwelling that:

- is located in the administrative area of a relevant local authority i.e. Donegal County Council or Mayo County Council;
- the construction of which was completed prior to date of coming into effect of the Regulations underpinning this grant scheme (31/01/2020);
- was constructed using defective concrete blocks; and
- is damaged due to the use of the defective concrete blocks.

4.3 The following are excluded from the definition of a relevant dwelling:

- a building or part of a building or out office that is not attached to a dwelling;
- a yard, garden or other land appurtenant to a dwelling;
- a building, other than a building comprising apartments, duplexes or maisonettes (or any combination of such dwellings), that provides multi-occupancy accommodation under specific conditions, including, but not limited to, a nursing home, a boarding school, a hotel or a hostel;
- dwellings owned by a Public Body.

5. Proof of relevant dwelling

5.1 It is a matter for the relevant local authority to determine whether a dwelling is a relevant dwelling. Such evidence, which the relevant local authority may consider in making such a determination, is outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Relevant Dwelling		
Item	Eligibility Criteria	Proof
1.	The dwelling must be located in the administrative area of a relevant local authority i.e. Donegal County Council or Mayo County Council.	➤ address including Eircode
2.	The construction of the dwelling must have been completed prior to 31/01/2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ evidence of payment of Local Property Tax (LPT); ➤ a title deed or similar legal instrument; ➤ evidence of current paid buildings insurance policy/schedule. <p>NOTE: All documents should demonstrate that the completed dwelling existed prior to 31/01/2020.</p>
3.	The dwelling must have been constructed using defective concrete blocks.	➤ engineer's report
4.	The dwelling is damaged due to the use of the defective concrete blocks.	➤ engineer's report

6. Engineer's report

- 6.1 For the purposes of this scheme an 'engineer's report' consists of two parts:
- a) A final report prepared by a competent engineer (from the I.S. 465 Register <https://www.engineersireland.ie/Registers-and-Panels/10>), in accordance with I.S. 465:2018 in respect of a relevant dwelling, that sets out confirmation of the existence of damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in the construction of the dwelling;

and

 - b) A recommendation by the competent engineer who prepared the final report, referred to in paragraph (a), of a remedial option for the relevant dwelling that represents the minimum feasible remedial works outlined in that final report (known as the relevant remedial option).
- 6.2 To fulfil paragraph b) above, the competent engineer must make a declaration of his/her recommended remedial option in Part B of the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* (see Appendix A).
- 6.3 Where the competent engineer who prepared the remedial works plan is not the competent engineer who provided the engineer's report referred, the competent engineer who prepared the remedial works plan must declare that, having exercised reasonable skill, care and diligence, he or she is satisfied that the relevant remedial option recommended in the engineer's report represents the remedial option requiring the minimum feasible remedial works to the dwelling for the remediation of the damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction. See Part B of the *Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval* (see Appendix B).

7. Relevant owner

7.1 The **relevant owner** must:

- be an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not);
- have acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020);
- occupy the dwelling as his or her principal private residence;
- intend in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling.

8. Proof of relevant owner

8.1 It is a matter for the relevant local authority to determine whether an owner is a relevant owner. Such evidence, which the relevant local authority may consider in making such a determination, is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 Relevant Owner		
Item	Eligibility Criteria	Proof
1.	The relevant owner must be an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PPSN, and a selection of the following: ➤ A title deed¹ or similar legal instrument proving ownership of the property; ➤ evidence of current paid buildings insurance policy/schedule; ➤ evidence of payment of Local Property Tax (LPT); ➤ mortgage statement dated within the last 12 months.

2.	The relevant owner must have acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A title deed¹ or similar legal instrument proving ownership of the property;
3.	The relevant owner must occupy the dwelling as his or her principal private residence. ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a utility bill in the applicant's name – e.g. gas, electricity dated within the last 6 months; ➤ details on the Register of Electors; ➤ a bank statement - dated within the last 6 months; ➤ a current car or home insurance policy (that shows the address); ➤ a document issued by a Government Department (that shows the address); ➤ a copy of the Tax Credit Certificate (TCC); ➤ a Statement of Liability (previously P21) from Revenue; ➤ a social insurance document (that shows the address).
4.	The relevant owner must intend in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ declaration that the individual intends to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling (see application forms in Appendix A, B and C).
<p>NOTE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A title deed can be obtained from the Property Registration Authority Ireland (https://www.prai.ie). 2. A dwelling may be deemed the individual's principal private residence where the dwelling was the individual's principal private residence but ceased to be such by virtue of the damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction. 		

9. Dwellings purchased after 31 January 2020

- 9.1 Where an individual purchased a dwelling on or after the 31 January 2020, he or she shall not be a relevant owner for the purposes of this scheme, where he or she knew or ought to have known that defective blocks were used in the construction of the dwelling.
- 9.2 By application of reasonable care or diligence, if a person should have known a fact, he or she is deemed to have constructive knowledge of that fact. Generally, a person is presumed by law to have constructive knowledge about the specific fact or condition. The burden of proof is on the individual to prove otherwise.
- 9.3 Individuals who purchase the dwelling on or after 31 January 2020 will generally not be eligible for a grant.
- 9.4 However, in certain limited circumstances, as an exception to the general rule, a relevant local authority may consider an application from an individual applying in good faith, on the honest belief that they either did not know, or could not have known that defective concrete blocks were used in the construction of the dwelling.
- 9.5 It is a matter for the relevant local authority (which is independent in the exercise of its functions), to determine based on facts and evidence in each individual case whether an applicant is, or is not entitled to apply for inclusion into the scheme.
- 9.6 A relevant local authority should make decisions about expenditure of public monies in a careful and prudent manner. Facts and evidence, which could be considered by a relevant local authority in making such a determination, may include:
- an affidavit asserting lack of knowledge on the part of a post 31 January 2020 purchaser;
 - the possibility that defective concrete blocks damage could have

manifested post 31 January 2020;

- whether or not there was an awareness of the issue of dwellings damaged by defective concrete blocks in relevant area/locality prior to or at the time of purchase;
- whether or not the purchaser, by application of reasonable care or diligence prior to purchase, could have discovered that defective concrete blocks were used in the construction of the dwelling;
- whether or not the purchaser had engaged the services of a competent construction professional prior to completing the purchase;
- whether or not the purchaser had engaged the services of a solicitor when purchasing the property;
- whether or not the purchaser had paid the current market value for the property at the time of purchase.

Local authorities may consider obtaining legal advice on this matter in relation to applications.

10. Qualifying works

10.1 Qualifying works, in relation to a relevant dwelling, means works required or ancillary to the remediation, in accordance with the relevant remedial option recommended in respect of the dwelling, of damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction.

10.2 Relevant local authorities should be mindful that the actual costs of qualifying works are dependent on a number of factors including house type, form of construction, design specification, geographic location and remedial works required.

10.3 Table 6 outlines qualifying works per relevant remedial option.

Table 6 Qualifying Works per Relevant Remedial Option						
Item No.	Description	Relevant Remedial Option				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Fees connected with the preparation of an engineer's report. ¹	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.	Professional fees relating to the preparation of a remedial works plan.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.	Professional fees relating to an appointment to a statutory health and safety role.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4.	Costs relating to the carrying out, supervision, inspection and certification of a relevant remedial option.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5.	Demolish entire building to top of foundations.	Y				
6.	Demolish external wall inner and outer leaf.	Y	Y	Y		
7.	Demolish rising walls.	Y	Y		Y ³	Y ³
8.	Demolish external wall outer leaf.	Y			Y	Y
9.	Temporary works and making good repairs to internal wall and ceiling finishes.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Item No.	Description	Relevant Remedial Option				
		1	2	3	4	5
10.	Removal of furniture/contents, temporary storage and reinstatement on completion.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11.	Rebuild of entire dwelling from top of foundation level.	Y				
12.	Rebuild rising walls.		Y		Y ³	Y ³
13.	Rebuild inner and outer leaf of external walls (incl. insulation, cills, lintels and associated sundries).		Y	Y		
14.	Rebuild outer leaf of external walls, insulation, cills, lintels and associated sundries.				Y	Y
15.	New wall plates and repairs to roof structure and roof finishes.		Y	Y		
16.	New fascias, soffits and rainwater goods.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
17.	Reinstatement and rewiring of electrical installation, recommissioning and builders work.		Y	Y		
18.	Reinstatement of lighting to external wall.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Item No.	Description	Relevant Remedial Option				
		1	2	3	4	5
19.	Painted render externally. ²	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
20.	Removal and re-use of existing completions, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external doors and windows, • roof lights (if applicable) and • internal doors. 	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
21.	Replacement of wall, floor and ceiling finishes throughout. ²	Y				
22.	Complete mechanical and electrical Installation.	Y				
23.	Reinstatement and recommissioning of mechanical installation, builders work.		Y	Y		
24.	Refitting and reinstating existing kitchens, wardrobes, sanitary ware etc.	Y	Y	Y		
25.	Minor external works to existing pathways.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
26.	Contractor preliminary costs.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NOTE:						
1. Subject to receipt of Confirmation of Eligibility						
2. Non-standard finishes excluded						
3. Outer leaf of external wall only						

11. Non-qualifying works

11.1 The following outlines a non-exhaustive list of items of non-qualifying works which are outside the scope of this grant scheme:

- costs associated with works undertaken prior to Confirmation of Grant Approval from a relevant local authority;
- costs associated with the temporary relocation of the occupants of the relevant dwelling during the remedial works;
- costs associated with works outside of the grant scheme;
- costs associated with any works that are not required for or ancillary to the remediation of damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction e.g. energy upgrades beyond the requirements of the Building Regulations² for existing dwelling.
- costs associated with the unnecessary replacement of items such as windows, doors and kitchen units.³

² The Building Regulations (as amended), apply to the construction of new buildings, extensions and material alterations to existing buildings. The five remedial options provided for under the defective concrete blocks grant scheme constitute a material alteration to an existing building.

Any works that are beyond the requirements of the current building regulations for existing dwellings, or any works that are not required for or ancillary to the remediation of damage to the dwelling arising out of, or in connection with, the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction, while not prohibited, do not qualify for grant assistance under the scheme. In this context, energy upgrades beyond the requirements of the current building regulations for existing dwellings, do not qualify for grant assistance under this scheme.

The primary responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the building regulations rests with the designers, builders and owners of buildings.

³ In line with Government policy on waste prevention and value for money considerations, the reuse, recovery and recycling of materials, is encouraged where possible. The costs associated with the unnecessary replacement of items such as windows, doors and kitchen units; do not qualify for grant assistance under this scheme.

- remedial works to foundations, and associated ground works;
- septic tanks and associated drainage works;
- costs associated with statutory permissions e.g. planning permission⁴ and building control notifications.

12. Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility

12.1 An applicant may apply to the relevant local authority for confirmation that he/she is eligible to be considered for grant approval.

12.2 Each relevant local authority must provide an *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* in the form specified in Appendix A to these guidelines.

12.3 Modification to the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form is not permitted, with the exception of the relevant local authority inserting details of address and contact persons into the application form.

12.4 The applicant must complete the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form, and include (amongst other things):

- engineer's report for the relevant dwelling;
- proof that the dwelling is located in the administrative area of a relevant local authority i.e. Donegal County Council or Mayo County Council;

⁴ In regard to planning permission and the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant scheme, the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), provide that "development" includes any associated demolition works. Consequently, the demolition and rebuild of affected dwellings will require planning permission. However, requirements regarding planning permission and contributions are ultimately a matter for the relevant planning authority, who are independent in the exercise of their statutory powers.

- proof that the construction of the dwelling was completed prior to 31/01/2020;
- proof that the dwelling was constructed using defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the dwelling is damaged due to the use of the defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the applicant is an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not);
- proof that the applicant acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020);
- proof that the applicant occupies the dwelling as his or her principal private residence;
- confirmation that the applicant intends in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the applicant;
- such information to allow verification of compliance with Local Property Tax for the dwelling;
- written consent to inspections by the relevant local authority;
- written consent by joint owners (other than the applicant), of the relevant dwelling for the inclusion of the relevant dwelling in the scheme, making of an application under Stages 1, 2 and 3 and, for payment of grant in respect of the dwelling;
- declaration of non-scheme payments received/not received by the applicant, and where such a payment was received, the specified amount;
- where recoupment of fees associated with the engineer's report is sought, the following additional items are required:

- invoice for fees associated with the engineer's report, and
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of relevant person.

12.5 A relevant local authority must be satisfied that the application is accurate and complete. In considering an Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility, the relevant local authority may:

- request the applicant to clarify in writing any information submitted to it in respect of the application;
- request the applicant to supply further documents or information in respect of the application; or
- make such enquiries as it considers necessary for the purpose of assessing the application, including causing the relevant dwelling concerned to be inspected by a suitably qualified person authorised in that regard by the relevant local authority.

12.6 In certain exceptional cases, such as:

- cases involving particularly complex qualifying works;
- cases deemed by a relevant local authority to present certain additional risks;
- or in cases where an applicant, eligible applicant, scheme participant, or joint owner(s) of the relevant dwelling, also act as the contractor or competent engineer (or both) in respect of an application under these Regulations,

the relevant local authority shall take all necessary additional measures as required, (such as requesting additional documents or information, making additional enquiries, and/or carrying out additional inspections) to ensure that the applicant, eligible applicant or scheme participant has

complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

12.7 A relevant local authority should be aware that an applicant must notify the relevant local authority in writing of any change in circumstances that affects his or her application (see Section 19).

12.8 The relevant local authority shall take into account additional documents and information obtained, or change in circumstance notified as outlined in 12.5, 12.6 and 12.7 above.

12.9 The relevant local authority shall advise the applicant accordingly in writing of their decision as to whether or not, the applicant is eligible to be considered for grant approval (known as an 'eligible applicant').

12.10 Each relevant local authority when issuing their decision should use the following standardised letters.

- Decision to issue Confirmation of Eligibility (see Appendix E); and
- Decision not to issue Confirmation of Eligibility (see Appendix F).

12.11 An applicant must declare whether or not a payment of compensation, insurance and warranties in respect of damage to the dwelling has been made for his or her benefit.

12.12 Where a payment has been made to an applicant, the individual must specify the amount of the payment received.

12.13 Applicants should make the declaration in Part A of the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form (see Appendix A).

13. Consent to inspections

13.1 The applicant must provide written consent for the relevant local authority to inspect the relevant dwelling, at such times as the relevant

local authority may consider necessary.

13.2 This consent may be found in Part A of the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form (see Appendix A).

14. Consent of joint owner(s)

14.1 An applicant must have the consent of all joint owners for a relevant dwelling to be included in the scheme.

14.2 This consent may be found in Part A of the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form (see Appendix A).

15. Recoupment of costs associated with the engineer's report

15.1 Where the relevant local authority has decided that the applicant is an eligible applicant, and the eligible applicant has sought payment for fees connected with the provision of an engineer's report, the relevant local authority may facilitate a payment to the eligible applicant for 90% of the fees connected with the provision of the engineer's report set out in the invoice submitted to the relevant local authority, subject to a maximum amount payable of €6,300.

15.2 In exceptional circumstances, where the invoice detailing the fees connected with the provision of an engineer's report, as submitted to the relevant local authority at Stage 1, is higher than €7,000, the balance may, if reasonable, be considered by the relevant local authority, as a qualifying cost, when assessing the approved cost at Stage 2: Grant Approval.

15.3 Where an eligible applicant has not sought payment for fees connected

with the provision of an engineer's report at Stage 1, the eligible applicant may seek payment following Confirmation of Grant Approval at Stage 2 being issued.

- 15.4 The relevant local authority should take into account any non-scheme payment.
- 15.5 The relevant local authority should make applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants aware that the higher the proportion of the approved cost spent on engineer's fees, the less will be available for other qualifying works deemed necessary for the remediation of the relevant dwelling.
- 15.6 Where a payment has previously been made to an individual in respect of fees connected with the provision of an engineer's report in relation to a relevant dwelling, no payment shall be made to any person in respect of such fees for another engineer's report relating to the dwelling.

16. Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval

- 16.1 An eligible applicant may apply to the relevant local authority for consideration of grant approval.
- 16.2 Each relevant local authority must facilitate an Application for *Stage 2: Grant Approval* in the form specified in Appendix B to these guidelines.
- 16.3 Modification to the Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval form is not permitted, with the exception of each relevant local authority inserting details of address and contact persons into the application form.
- 16.4 The eligible applicant must complete the Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval form, and include (amongst other things):

- engineer's report⁵ for the relevant dwelling;
- proof that the dwelling is located in the administrative area of a relevant local authority i.e. Donegal County Council or Mayo County Council;
- proof that the construction of the dwelling was completed prior to 31/01/2020;
- proof that the dwelling was constructed using defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the dwelling is damaged due to the use of the defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the eligible applicant is an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not);
- proof that the eligible applicant acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020);
- proof that the eligible applicant occupies the dwelling as his or her principal private residence;
- confirmation that the eligible applicant intends in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling;
- a copy of the letter of Confirmation of Eligibility;
- a remedial works plan relating to the relevant dwelling;
- a programme of works from the contractor, setting out the sequencing and anticipated duration of the remedial works specified in the remedial works plan;
- where a payment has been made to an eligible applicant with respect to the engineer's report, provide written confirmation of payment (and amount of the payment);
- an itemised statement from a contractor, specifying the cost of carrying out, supervising and certifying the works identified in the remedial works plan, in accordance with the programme of works;

⁵ **NOTE:** The engineer's report comprises the I.S. 465 Final Report plus the declaration by the competent engineer of his/her recommended remedial option in Part B of the Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility.

- an itemised statement from a competent engineer, specifying the fees for preparing the remedial works plan, professional oversight and certification of the works identified in the remedial works plan, in accordance with the programme of works;
- declaration of compensation payments (and amount) made to the applicant outside of the scheme;
- such information to allow verification of compliance with Local Property Tax for the dwelling;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the eligible applicant;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the relevant person who provided the engineer's report;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the relevant person who provided the remedial works plan (if different);
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the contractor.

16.5 A relevant local authority must be satisfied that the application is accurate and complete. In considering an Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval, the relevant local authority may:

- request the applicant to clarify in writing any information submitted to it in respect of the application;
- request the applicant to supply further documents or information in respect of the application; or
- make such enquiries as it considers necessary for the purpose of assessing the application, including causing the relevant dwelling concerned to be inspected by a suitably qualified person, authorised in that regard by the relevant local authority.

16.6 In certain exceptional cases, such as:

- cases involving particularly complex qualifying works;
- cases deemed by a relevant local authority to present certain additional risks;
- or in cases where an applicant, eligible applicant, scheme participant, or joint owner(s) of the relevant dwelling, also act as the contractor or competent engineer (or both) in respect of an application under these Regulations;

the relevant local authority shall take all necessary additional measures as required, (such as requesting additional documents or information, making additional enquiries, and/or carrying out additional inspections) to ensure that the applicant, eligible applicant or scheme participant has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

16.7 A relevant local authority should be aware that an eligible applicant must notify the relevant local authority in writing of any change in circumstances that affects his or her application (see Section 19).

16.8 The relevant local authority shall take into account additional documents and information obtained, or change in circumstance notified as outlined in 16.5, 16.6 and 16.7 above.

16.9 The relevant local authority must be satisfied that the remedial works plan submitted is consistent with the relevant remedial option recommended by the competent engineer in the engineer's report.

16.10 The relevant local authority must be satisfied that the costs submitted are the reasonable costs in relation to carrying out the qualifying works deemed necessary for the remediation of the relevant dwelling.

16.11 The relevant local authority must determine an approved cost for the

relevant remedial option, subject to the maximum approved cost.

16.12 The maximum grant payable for each remedial option is 90% of the maximum approved cost, or 90% of the actual cost of the qualifying works carried out, whichever is the lesser.

16.13 The relevant local authority may decide to issue/not to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval.

16.14 The relevant local authority shall advise the eligible applicant accordingly in writing of their decision in respect of the Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval, setting out the amount of the approved cost and that he/she is a scheme participant.

16.15 Where the relevant local authority decides to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval, and a payment has already been made in respect of the engineer's report, further to Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility, the amount of the approved cost notified to the eligible applicant will set out the approved cost less the amount of the fees connected with the provision of the engineer's report set out in the invoice submitted to the relevant local authority at Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility, or €7,000 whichever is the lesser.

16.16 Each relevant local authority when issuing their decision should use the following standardised letters.

- decision to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval (see Appendix G);
and
- decision not to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval (see Appendix H).

16.17 An eligible applicant must declare whether or not, a payment of compensation, insurance and warranties in respect of damage to the dwelling has been made for his or her benefit. Where a payment has been made to an eligible applicant, the individual must specify the amount of the payment received.

16.18 Eligible applicants should make a declaration as outlined in 16.17, in Part A of the *Application for Stage 2: Grant Approval* form (see Appendix B).

16.19 Where a relevant local authority has been notified that payment of compensation, insurance and warranties in respect of damage to the dwelling has been made for the benefit of an eligible applicant, the relevant local authority shall:

- where such payment is less than the amount of the approved cost concerned, the amount of such payment made to the eligible applicant shall be deducted from the amount of approved cost, less the amount of the fees connected with the provision of the engineer's report (where applicable); and
- where such payment is equal to or greater than the amount of the approved cost concerned, notify the eligible applicant that he or she may not seek payment for any amount at Stage 3: Payment of Grant.

17. Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant

17.1 A scheme participant may apply to the relevant local authority for payment of grant following confirmation of Stage 2: Grant Approval.

17.2 Each relevant local authority must facilitate an *Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant* in the form specified in Appendix C to these guidelines.

17.3 Modification to the Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant form is not permitted, with the exception of each local authority inserting details of address and contact persons into the application form.

17.4 The scheme participant must complete the Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant form, and include (amongst other things):

- proof that the dwelling is located in the administrative area of a relevant local authority i.e. Donegal County Council or Mayo County Council;
- proof that the construction of the dwelling was completed prior to 31/01/2020;
- proof that the dwelling was constructed using defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the dwelling is damaged due to the use of the defective concrete blocks;
- proof that the eligible applicant is an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not);
- proof that the eligible applicant acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020);
- proof that the eligible applicant occupies the dwelling as his or her principal private residence;
- confirmation that the eligible applicant intends in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling;
- a copy of the letter of Confirmation of Grant Approval;
- an invoice from a contractor, detailing in an itemised manner, the elements of qualifying works, and associated cost of which the eligible applicant is seeking payment;
- an invoice from a competent engineer, specifying the fees associated with the preparation of a remedial works plan, professional oversight and certification of the works identified in the remedial works plan, in accordance with the programme of works;
- declaration of compensation payments (and amount), made to the applicant outside of the scheme;
- such information to allow verification of compliance with Local Property Tax for the dwelling;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the scheme

participant;

- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the relevant person who provided the remedial works plan, professional oversight and certification;
- such information to allow verification of tax compliance of the contractor;
- where recoupment of fees associated with the engineer's report is sought, the following additional items are required:
 - invoice for fees associated with the engineer's report, and
 - such information to allow verification of tax compliance of relevant person.
- a certificate of remediation for the dwelling (where final payment is sought).

17.5 The relevant local authority must be satisfied that the Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant is accurate and complete. In considering an Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant, the relevant local authority may:

- request the applicant to clarify in writing any information submitted to it in respect of the application;
- request the applicant to supply further documents or information in respect of the application; or
- make such enquiries as it considers necessary for the purpose of assessing the application, including causing the relevant dwelling concerned to be inspected by a suitably qualified person authorised in that regard by the relevant local authority.

17.6 In certain exceptional cases, such as:

- cases involving particularly complex qualifying works;
- cases deemed by a relevant local authority to present certain additional risks;
- or in cases where an applicant, eligible applicant, scheme participant, or joint owner(s) of the relevant dwelling, also act as the contractor or competent engineer (or both) in respect of an application under these Regulations;

the relevant local authority shall take all necessary additional measures as required, (such as requesting additional documents or information, making additional enquiries, and/or carrying out additional inspections) to ensure that the applicant, eligible applicant or scheme participant has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

17.7 A relevant local authority should be aware that a scheme participant must notify the relevant local authority in writing of any change in circumstances that affects his or her application (see Section 19).

17.8 The relevant local authority shall take into account additional documents and information obtained, or change in circumstance notified as outlined in 17.5, 17.6 and 17.7 above.

17.9 A scheme participant must declare whether or not a payment e.g. compensation, insurance and warranties in respect of damage to the dwelling has been made for his or her benefit.

17.10 Where a payment has been made to a scheme participant, the individual must specify the amount of the payment received.

17.11 Scheme participants should make a declaration in Part A of the *Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant* form (see Appendix C).

17.12 Where a relevant local authority has been notified that payment of compensation, insurance and warranties in respect of damage to the dwelling has been made for the benefit of a scheme participant:

- no payment shall be made to the scheme participant, unless the relevant local authority is satisfied that the cost of the qualifying works done for which payment is sought exceeds the amount of any such non-scheme payment; and
- no payment shall be made to a scheme participant, other than in respect of the portion of the qualifying works the cost of which exceeds the amount of such non-scheme payment.

17.13 The relevant local authority must be satisfied that the qualifying works the subject of the application have been completed.

17.14 Subject to Section 18, the relevant local authority must be satisfied that the payment to be made does not exceed 90% of the approved cost concerned, or 90% of the actual cost of the qualifying works concerned, whichever is the lesser.

17.15 A grant under this scheme shall not be paid in respect of:

- qualifying works (other than fees connected with the engineer's report and remedial works plan), that commenced prior to grant approval;
- a dwelling which had been previously grant aided under this scheme **(one dwelling, one grant)**;
- a dwelling that has not previously received an approval for Stage 2: Confirmation of Grant Approval.

17.16 The relevant local authority shall not make payment to a scheme

participant where an *Application for Stage 3: Payment of Grant* is submitted to the relevant local authority later than 12 months after the date on which the certificate of remediation in respect of the dwelling is signed.

17.17 Each relevant local authority when issuing their decision should use the following standardised letters.

- Decision to Approve Application for Payment (see Appendix J), and
- Decision not to Approve Application for Payment (see Appendix K).

18. Stage payments

18.1 A scheme participant may apply to a relevant local authority for payment for qualifying works (once they have been completed).

18.2 The grant scheme facilitates the relevant local authority to pay the grant to the applicant by way of stage payments.

18.3 Relevant local authorities should adopt a consistent approach when setting a limit on the amount of stage payments available. The number of stage payments will be based on the eligible applicant's remedial option.

18.4 Stage payments shall not exceed 75% of the approved cost.

18.5 Please refer to Section 12, 16 and 17 for non-scheme payments.

19. Notification of change in circumstances

19.1 Where an applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant becomes aware of any change in circumstances that affects his or her application under this grant scheme submitted to the relevant local authority, he or she shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable, notify the relevant local authority in writing of the change in circumstances.

19.2 Such circumstances⁶ may include:

- change of contractor/engineer;
- sale of relevant dwelling;
- withdrawal of application, etc.

19.3 A standardised letter of notification of change in circumstances is provided in Appendix D. The relevant local authority should make this standardised letter available to applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants.

20. Refund of compensation

20.1 Where a non-scheme payment has been made to or for the benefit of an eligible applicant or individual in respect of damage to the relevant dwelling, arising out of or in connection with the use of defective concrete blocks in its construction, that eligible applicant or individual shall give notice in writing to the relevant local authority of the payment and the amount thereof within 28 days of the making of that payment.

20.2 A standardised notice of non-scheme payments received is provided in Appendix L. The relevant local authority should make this notice available to eligible applicants and individuals.

20.3 On receipt of such a notice, where a payment has previously been made to the eligible applicant or individual concerned, the relevant local authority shall give notice in writing to the eligible applicant or individual concerned, of the total amount paid to the eligible applicant or individual.

20.4 A standardised notice is provided in Appendix M and should be used by

⁶ In the event of a change of applicant, refer separately to the procedure outlined in Section 21.

each relevant local authority.

20.5 On receipt of the notice from the relevant local authority, the eligible applicant or individual concerned, as the case may be, shall be immediately liable to pay to the relevant local authority the lesser of the following amounts:

- the amount equal to the payment or payments made as set out in the notice referred to in 20.2; or
- the amount equal to the payment referred to in 20.1.

21. Change of applicant

21.1 Where for specific reasons, the individual, who is the applicant, eligible applicant, or scheme participant, needs to be changed the following procedures must apply.

21.2 The new individual must complete the *Notification of Change of Applicant* form (see Appendix N)⁷, and include (amongst other things):

- proof that the applicant is an individual who owns the dwelling (whether jointly or not);
- proof that the individual acquired ownership of the dwelling prior to 31 January 2020 (or inherited the dwelling after 31 January 2020);
- proof that the applicant occupies the dwelling as his or her principal private residence;
- confirmation that the applicant intends in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling;
- proof of tax compliance of the individual;

⁷ The relevant local authority should make this notice available to eligible applicants and individuals.

- proof of compliance with Local Property Tax for the dwelling;
- written consent to inspections by the relevant local authority;
- written consent by joint owners (other than the applicant), of the relevant dwelling for the inclusion of the relevant dwelling in the scheme, making of an application under Stages 1, 2 and 3 and, for payment of grant in respect of the dwelling;
- declaration of non-scheme payments received/not received by the applicant, and where such a payment was received, the specified amount.

21.3 Where the relevant local authority is satisfied that applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant, comply with the requirements of the grant scheme, the relevant local authority should notify the individual concerned that from the date of the notification, the individual is deemed to be the (applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant), for the purposes of the grant scheme.

21.4 A standardised Notification of Acceptance of Change of Applicant is provided in Appendix O.

22. Certificate of Remediation

22.1 The 'Certificate of Remediation', in relation to a relevant dwelling, means a certificate, in such form as may be specified by the Minister, signed by a contractor and a competent engineer certifying that, on a stated date on or before the date on which the certificate is signed, the qualifying works to the dwelling carried out and supervised by the contractor, and designed and inspected by the competent engineer:

- (a) were completed in accordance with the remedial works plan concerned; and

(b) are compliant with the requirements of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 497 of 1997).

22.2 The Certificate of Remediation for the purposes of this grant scheme is provided in Appendix P.⁸

23. Tax clearance procedures

23.1 Department of Finance Circular 44/2006 sets down revised procedures in relation to tax clearance requirements in relation to grant payments from State and public sector bodies, which apply to all applications received after 1 January 2007. In line with changes introduced in the Finance Act 2014, Revenue introduced online electronic Tax Clearance (eTC) on 1 January 2016.

23.2 The relevant local authority must confirm the tax clearance of each applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant, contractor and competent engineer at Stage1, 2 and 3.

23.3 Tax clearance status for an applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant

Applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants are required to provide such information, as the relevant local authority may require to verify that a valid Tax Clearance Certificate has been issued to the applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant. The relevant local authority may confirm an applicant's/eligible applicant's/scheme participant's tax clearance status by using the on-line verification facility on the Revenue Commissioners' website, www.ros.ie and entering the applicant's/eligible applicant's/scheme participant's PPSN.

23.4 Tax clearance status for contractor/competent engineer

⁸ The relevant local authority should make the Certificate of Remediation publically available.

Applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants are required to provide the name, address and tax reference number of the contractor/competent engineer. Contractors/competent engineers must authorise the relevant local authority to confirm electronically that he/she holds a valid Tax Clearance Certificate by quoting their tax reference number and tax clearance access number. The relevant local authority may confirm a contractor's/competent engineer's tax clearance status by using the on-line verification facility on the Revenue Commissioners' website, www.ros.ie and entering their tax reference number.

23.5 The provisions of Department of Finance Circular 44/06 should be brought to the attention off all staff involved in the processing of grants under the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme. Copies of the Circular can be accessed at the Department of Finance website, www.finance.gov.ie.

24. Local Property Tax

24.1 It is an ongoing condition of this scheme that there are no outstanding amounts payable in respect of local property tax for the relevant dwelling concerned. Applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants are required to provide such information as the relevant local authority may require to be satisfied that this condition is fulfilled.

25. Standard costs

25.1 The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government may, from time to time issue guidance on standard costs, which the relevant local authority shall consider when assessing an application.

25.2 Relevant local authorities shall keep an up to date list of costs charged by contractors and engineers, which shall be an accurate representation of the cost of each element of qualifying work in the area. The following

must be recorded and stored in an electronic format (.xls) to enable the sharing of cost data at a future point with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government:

- relevant remedial work option;
- dwelling type (detached, terrace, etc.);
- number of storeys;
- linear length of affected walls;
- net floor area of affected dwelling;
- fees connected with preparation of an engineer's report;
- professional fees relating to the preparation of a remedial works plan;
- construction costs related to carrying out, supervision and certification of the relevant remedial option;
- professional fees relating to the inspection and certification of the relevant remedial option.
- professional fees relating to an appointment to a statutory health and safety role.

NOTE: All information collated for this purpose must be redacted of any personal information/matters of commercial sensitivity.

25.3 A sample contractor quotation template is provided in Appendix R⁹ to aid this process.

25.4 It is open to relevant local authorities to fund a higher cost than the anticipated standard cost for that set of qualifying works, if the authority deems that such a higher cost is justified (subject to the maximum approved costs limits in Table 3).

25.5 In cases where quotations are considerably lower than the anticipated standard cost, the relevant local authority shall be satisfied that the proposed qualifying works are appropriate and will meet required

⁹ The relevant local authority should make this template publically available.

standards.

26. Appeals procedure

26.1 In processing applications under this grant scheme, it is recognised that some applicants/eligible applicants/scheme participants may disagree with the decision of the relevant local authority.

26.2 An applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant may appeal against a decision of the relevant local authority:

- a) not to issue Confirmation of Eligibility;
- b) not to issue Confirmation of Grant Approval;
- c) not to approve Application for Payment.

NOTE: no other grounds for appeal are permitted under *S.I. 25 of 2020*.

26.3 The following procedure shall apply to each appeal:

- applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant is invited to submit a written appeal on any decision notified to them by the relevant local authority as per Section 25.2 above, within 3 weeks of the date of the decision;
- the appeal must state the reasons for the appeal and the grounds for same;
- appeals will be considered and adjudicated on by a Council Official who was not involved with the original assessment, as designated by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority
- appeals will be considered and adjudicated upon with 4 weeks of receipt of the appeal;

- a decision on an appeal will be notified to each applicant/eligible applicant/scheme participant within 2 weeks of the decision being made.

27. Monitoring of expenditure

27.1 The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government will monitor expenditure at an overall sub-head level to ensure proper governance and oversight of the scheme. Grant approvals and claims received from each local authority will be tracked on an on-going basis.

27.2 The Department may also contact the local authorities requesting additional information in relation to pending applications. This will allow the Department to forecast future expenditure. Returns should be made promptly on receipt of such a request.

28. Research

28.1 The Report of the Expert Panel on Concrete Blocks¹⁰ recommended that further research should be undertaken to gain a greater understanding of the effects of pyrite and muscovite mica in concrete blocks in order to avoid future adverse effects in buildings.

28.2 In this regard, the permission of the applicant and competent engineer is sought in the *Application for Stage 1: Confirmation of Eligibility* form to allow the final report to be used by public bodies to facilitate further research relating to defective concrete blocks.

28.3 Where consent has been given by the applicant and competent engineer, the relevant local authority should make arrangements to redact the final report of any personal information, give it a reference

¹⁰ <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/building-standards/other/report-expert-panel-concrete-blocks>

number and store in an electronic format (pdf), to enable the sharing of the technical data at a future point.

29. Enquiries

29.1 Please email any enquiries in relation to the administrative guidelines to defectiveconcreteblocks@housing.gov.ie.

**Housing Grants Section,
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,
Government Offices,
Ballina,
Co. Mayo
F26 E8N6**