
For Written Answer on : 20/05/2020
Question Number(s): 1341,1390 Question Reference(s): 5950/20, 6972/20
Department: Housing, Planning and Local Government
Asked by: Eoin Ó Broin T.D., Cian O'Callaghan T.D.

QUESTION

* To ask the Minister for Housing; Planning and Local Government his plans to introduce a latent defects redress scheme in view of the meeting his Department had with a group (details supplied).
- Eoin Ó Broin T.D.

For WRITTEN answer on Wednesday, 20 May, 2020.

REPLY

I acknowledge the very stressful circumstances which owners and residents face when their homes are affected by construction defects.

My colleague Minister English along with officials from my Department, met with the groups referred to by the Deputies earlier this year in relation to their proposals, which I understand were also circulated by the groups to all Oireachtas members. I am advised at that meeting the current position regarding building defects in private dwellings was outlined, which is that, in general, building defects are matters for resolution between the contracting parties involved, the homeowner, the builder, the developer and/or their respective insurers, structural guarantee or warranty scheme.

While my Department has overall responsibility for establishing and maintaining an effective regulatory framework for building standards and building control, it has no general statutory role in resolving defects in privately owned buildings, including dwellings, nor does it have a budget for such matters.

I believe that the building control reform agenda already well underway provides a comprehensive roadmap for embedding an enhanced culture of compliance and accountability within the construction industry and for strengthening the building control framework in Ireland. The reform agenda includes:

- amendments made to the Building Control Regulations;
- the National Building Control Management Project; and
- the ongoing development of new legislation through the Building Control (Construction Industry Register Ireland) Bill.

Local authorities have extensive powers of inspection and enforcement under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, the Building Control Acts, the Housing Acts and the Planning and Development Acts. Fire services may inspect buildings in cases of defects or complaints in respect of fire safety. They work with building owners to ensure that immediate risks are addressed and that a plan is put in place, where required, for works to bring buildings into compliance.

My focus will remain firmly on ensuring the full roll out of the building control reform agenda, to ensure that all those that engaged in the construction sector take their responsibilities seriously and are appropriately held to account. As part of the reform agenda, consumer protection will continue to be my core concern and any proposals in that regard will, of course, be considered.