

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head: 82 Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

- (a) According to the Buildings Department (BD), consultants will be appointed to identify and survey existing unauthorised building works (UBWs) in village houses belonging to the first round targets for enforcement, and conduct inspection upon expiry of the removal orders. Please advise on the progress of appointing the consultants and the detailed timetable for the entire appointment process? When will the consultants be expected to complete identifying all existing UBWs in village houses belonging to the first round targets for enforcement and to submit a report to the BD? What is the Government's estimated expenditure for the work involved?
- (b) Regarding the implementation of the "Reporting Scheme for UBWs in Village Houses" and the formulation of guidelines for inspection and safety certification of the structural safety of village houses, when will the standard reporting form and practice guidelines be expected to be published? What is the progress in these two areas of work?
- (c) When will the setting up of a database of UBWs in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs) be expected to complete so as to include these houses in the current Building Condition Information System? Please provide details of the work plan and the estimated expenditure.
- (d) As expected by the BD, how much time is required for tackling UBWs in NTEHs belonging to the first round targets for enforcement? What is the timetable for handling the existing UBWs that "constitute less serious contravention of the law and pose lower potential risks"?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Tanya

Reply:

The Buildings Department (BD) will set up a dedicated section in April 2012 for implementing an enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs). Forty-one professional, technical and clerical staff will be allocated to this dedicated section in 2012-13.

The enhanced enforcement strategy includes a large scale operation (LSO) for removal of existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety which are the first round target for priority enforcement action, a Reporting Scheme for existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute less serious contravention and pose lower potential risks to building safety, and immediate enforcement actions against other UBWs in NTEHs which constitute imminent danger, or are newly erected or found under construction. As the LSO is part of the overall responsibility of the dedicated section for a full range of work in relation to the enhanced enforcement strategy, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the total expenditure for this LSO alone.

In view of the substantial scale of the enforcement against first round targets, the LSO will be conducted in phases. As for the first phase of the operation, the BD invited tender in February 2012 for commissioning consultants to commence survey in April 2012 to identify the first round targets for issue of removal orders and to conduct compliance inspections after expiry of the removal orders. Given the large number of UBWs involved, the whole exercise is likely to take some time. We are at this stage unable to accurately assess the time required for completing the survey of all first round targets, as well as the time span of the entire enforcement programme.

As regards the existing UBWs which constitute less serious contravention of the law and pose lower potential risks, the BD will analyse information collected from the Reporting Scheme, conduct objective risk assessment and then formulate follow-up plans for progressive enforcement after dealing with the first round targets.

The BD is drawing up guidelines for inspections and safety certification carried out under the Reporting Scheme, and is finalising a standard proforma for reporting UBWs. The reporting form and guidelines should be ready by 1 April 2012.

The BD aims to set up a database of UBWs in NTEHs making use of the information collected from the Reporting Scheme. Since participation in the Scheme is voluntary, it is not possible at this stage to estimate the number of reports which will be received as well as the degree of coverage of the database. As the enhancement to the existing information system is part of the full range of work in relation to the implementation of the enhanced enforcement strategy and other operations within the BD, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the expenditure solely for setting up the database.

Signature _____

Name in block letters AU Choi-kai

Post Title Director of Buildings

Date 27.2.2012