

**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:

The Buildings Department will continue the operation of the pilot Joint Office (JO) with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department dedicated to handling public complaints about water seepage problems in buildings for another two years. Will the Administration advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) Whether it has assessed the number of cases that can be handled by the JO in these two years?
- (b) What is the amount of resources and manpower for the JO that will be involved in these two years?
- (c) If the JO achieves significant results and is welcomed by the public, will consideration be given to making the JO permanent or further extending its operation period. If so, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Water seepage in private premises is primarily a matter of building management and maintenance for property owners. However, where the problem of water seepage causes public health nuisance, building structural safety risks or wastage of water, the Government will consider intervention by exercising the relevant statutory powers. To facilitate action, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department (BD) have established the Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to co-ordinate investigation of complaints and taking of enforcement actions. This programme will be extended for another two years from 2012-13. Based on past experience, it is estimated that the JO should be able to handle about 46 000 seepage cases in the coming two years.

The two-year extension of this programme will involve provision of 60 professional and technical staff from the BD, at an estimated expenditure of about \$49 million per year.

The Administration has been monitoring the work of the JO and will review its long term role, organisation and staffing to ensure effective enforcement of the law and efficient operation of the JO.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	_____ AU Choi-kai
Post Title	_____ Director of Buildings
Date	_____ 27.2.2012