

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

DEVB(PL)085

Question Serial No.

0758

Head: 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Under the Programme “Buildings and Building Works”, the financial provision for 2013-14 is \$94.5 million (9.2%) higher than 2012-13. The increased funding is mainly used for enhancing enforcement relating to building safety, including (a) enforcement against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses; (b) large scale operations against sub-divided flats; and (c) full implementation of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the respective estimated expenditure involved in the 3 items in (a), (b) and (c) above. Regarding item (a), what is the target number of cases to be handled?

Besides, what is the composition of the 87 posts to be created by the Buildings Department in 2013-14? Will these posts be engaged in stepping up prosecution action against UBWs cases?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply:

- (a) Unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs) - Since 1 April 2012, the Buildings Department (BD) has established a dedicated Village Houses Section to implement the enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised UBWs in NTEHs. The enhanced enforcement strategy includes a large scale operation for removal of existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety (known as First Round Targets), a Reporting Scheme for existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute less serious contravention of the law 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. In 2013-14, the expenditure for the Village Houses Section is estimated to be about \$33 million. During the year, the BD will survey 8 000 NTEHs in the large scale operation to identify First Round Targets for priority enforcement action. It is expected that 400 removal orders will be issued for these UBWs in NTEHs. The

Department will also continue to administer the Reporting Scheme and process the 18 034 reporting forms submitted under the Reporting Scheme.

- (b) Enforcement action against sub-divided flats - As the enforcement action against irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats, including the large scale operation on sub-divided flats, is carried out by the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Division of the BD as part of their overall duties to implement the Department's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the financial provision allocated solely for this initiative.
- (c) Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) – The implementation of the MBIS and MWIS is part of the overall duties of the Mandatory Building Inspection Division and the two Existing Buildings Divisions of the BD. The Mandatory Building Inspection Division is also responsible for taking enforcement actions against irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats and enforcing the fire safety legislation. We are thus not able to provide a breakdown of the financial provision allocated specifically for implementing the MBIS and the MWIS.

As regards the 87 new posts to be created in the BD in 2013-14, these comprise 21 professional posts (four Senior Building Surveyor / Senior Structural Engineer and 17 Building Surveyor / Structural Engineer posts), nine technical posts (Survey Officer (Building) / Technical Officer (Structural) posts) and 57 clerical grade posts.

Among the 87 new posts, ten posts for professional and technical staff and 57 posts for clerical grade staff will be engaged for strengthening departmental and supporting services, as well as enhancing the BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme through strengthening the research and development capacity, enhancing the audit function and reinforcing the support for various divisions in implementing the BD's enforcement programme. The other 20 posts for professional and technical staff will be assigned to strengthen services in the approval of building plans and related applications for private development projects.

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