Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)113

Question Serial No.

1666

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:

In 2013-14, what policies and measures will the Government adopt to enhance the efficiency of the Joint Office (JO) in handling public reports about water seepage problems, to shorten the time for handling complaint cases and to enhance the effectiveness of the JO?

Asked by: Hon. TSE Wai-chun, Paul

Reply:

Water seepage in private premises is primarily a matter of building management and maintenance for property owners. However, if 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 have established the Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to co-ordinate investigation of reports on water seepage and taking of enforcement actions. The programme has been extended for two years from 2012-13.

The JO has implemented a number of measures to enhance the effectiveness of handling reports on water seepage, namely drawing up internal guidelines on investigation work, formulating milestones for progress monitoring at various stages of investigation, refining operational guidelines on exercising power of entry under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinances and enhancing management information. The JO endeavours to keep abreast of the latest technological developments and is working with the Applied Science and Technology Research Institute to explore more effective investigation methods so as to enhance the JO's capability in handling reports on water seepage. Meanwhile, the Administration is conducting a review on the long term role, organisation and staffing of the JO.

Name in block letters: AU Choi-kai

Post Title: Director of Buildings

Date: 2.4.2013