

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(PL)100**

**(Question Serial No. 1111)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works  
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (AU Choi-kai)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 46):

Under the programme “Buildings and Building Works”, village by village survey of 8 927 New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs) was completed in 2013. Will the Government advise this Committee:

1. of the manpower and expenditure involved in the above task in 2013; of the number of unauthorised building works (UBWs) that constituted serious contravention of the law and posed higher potential risks to building safety; of the number of owners prosecuted for failure to comply with removal orders; whether additional manpower will be deployed in the coming year to continue the large scale operation for the inspection and removal of UBWs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety; if yes, of the details, and the expenditure involved; if not, of the reasons for that; and
2. of the manpower and expenditure involved in the Reporting Scheme for UBWs in NTEHs this year; of the details of publicity for the Reporting Scheme this year, and the manpower and expenditure involved; whether manpower will be increased and publicity enhanced for the Reporting Scheme in the coming year; if yes, of the details, and the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

On 1 April 2012, the Buildings Department (BD) established a dedicated Village Houses Section (VHS) comprising 41 professional, technical and clerical staff to implement the enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs). 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 (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 VHS is about \$31 million. The expenditure for hiring consultancy services for the village by village survey of NTEHs and processing of the report forms under the Reporting Scheme is about \$7.4 million. Since the village by village survey of the 8 927 NTEHs in 2013 for identifying First Round Targets for priority enforcement action and administration of the Reporting Scheme are part of the overall responsibility of VHS which undertakes the full range of work in relation to the enhanced enforcement strategy against UBWs in NTEHs, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower and expenditure associated solely with the respective tasks.

Out of the 8 927 NTEHs inspected in LSO, BD has identified about 1 000 suspected cases for investigation of First Round Targets. Detailed surveys will be conducted to verify the nature of UBWs before removal orders are issued to the owners of NTEH concerned. Up to 28 February 2014, 84 removal orders had been issued against the confirmed First Round Targets UBWs.

In 2013, eight prosecutions were instigated against the owners of NTEHs for failure to comply with the removal orders.

The 41 professional, technical and clerical staff of VHS will continue to conduct LSO and administer the Reporting Scheme in 2014 as part of their overall responsibilities for the full range of work relating to the enhanced enforcement strategy against UBWs in NTEHs. It is assessed that VHS will be able to meet the targets set for 2014 without additional manpower. As the reporting period of the Reporting Scheme ended on 31 December 2012, there will be no further publicity for the Reporting Scheme in 2014.