

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)330

(Question Serial No. 5464)

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. 64):

The Administration stated that as the workload associated with the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme was exceptional, with the number of household units substantially increased, resources would be redeployed to clear the backlog of a large number of buildings targeted in 2013 but not yet been served with inspection notices. As such, the numbers of buildings targeted for prescribed building and window inspections in 2014 will be slashed from 2 000 and 5 800 respectively to 1 000 per year uniformly. Will the Administration advise this Committee:

- (1) of the assessed changes in the expenditure and manpower involved before and after the targets were lowered; and
- (2) whether it has considered increasing manpower to cope with the increased workload instead of making a substantiate adjustment to the targets, which would affect the occupants; if yes, of the number of additional staff and expenditure to be increased; if not, the reasons for that?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) were fully implemented on 30 June 2012. The original target was to select about 2 000 and 5 800 target buildings each year for implementation of MBIS and MWIS respectively. The estimated numbers of statutory notices to be issued in 2013 under the two schemes were 49 000 and 350 000 respectively. The planned progress was not achieved due to the exceptionally heavy workload associated with the implementation of the schemes and substantial efforts spent to attend to an overwhelming volume of public enquiries and requests for on-site briefing sessions from building owners and stakeholders at the initial stage of implementation. Having regard to the present progress and the general views in the community that the pace of implementation of the two schemes should be slowed down to give building owners more time to understand the new requirements and get prepared, the Buildings Department (BD) will adjust downwards the number of target buildings to be newly selected in

2014 to 1 000 for both schemes. Taking into account backlog cases and buildings to be newly selected, BD plans to issue statutory notices to about 1 800 and 3 300 target buildings in 2014 for implementation of MBIS and MWIS respectively (i.e. 1 800 buildings for implementation of MBIS and MWIS concurrently, and another 1 500 buildings for implementation of MWIS only). BD will review the progress and implementation details of the two schemes from time to time in the light of experience gained and feedback from stakeholders and the community.

The implementation of MBIS and MWIS is carried out by the existing resources of 493 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Division of BD as part of their overall duties to implement the Department's building safety and maintenance enforcement programme. In 2014-15, 193 new non-directorate civil service posts, including those converted from existing non-civil service contract positions, will be assigned for enhancing various building safety and maintenance enforcement programmes including MBIS and MWIS. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower or expenditure involved solely for the implementation of the two schemes. Apart from the provision of manpower resources, BD will continue to streamline operational procedures to improve efficiency and re-prioritise its work with a view to clearing the backlog as soon as possible.