

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 5155)

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

Question (Member Question No. 60):

In 2014-15, the Buildings Department plans to continue to implement the package of new measures to foster a quality and sustainable built environment introduced since April 2011. In this connection, will the Administration advise this Committee of the details of such measures, the implementation progress and the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. TIEN Pei-chun, James

Reply:

To foster a quality and sustainable built environment through building design, the Buildings Department (BD) has since 1 April 2011 implemented a package of measures including the promulgation of the sustainable building design (SBD) guidelines on building separation, building setback and site coverage of greenery; tightening of gross floor area (GFA) concessions for green and amenity features; and introduction of higher energy efficiency requirements on commercial buildings and hotels.

Under the above package of measures, to contain the effect on building bulk while allowing design flexibility for incorporating desirable green and amenity features as well as non-mandatory or non-essential plant rooms and services, such as balconies, residents' recreational facilities, air-conditioning plant rooms and plant rooms for environmentally friendly systems, an overall cap is imposed on the total amount of GFA concessions for these features. The cap is set at 10% of the total GFA of a development. Compliance with the SBD guidelines is one of the pre-requisites for granting GFA concessions. Moreover, to save electricity consumption for air-conditioning, new commercial and hotel developments are required to be designed to reduce heat transfer to the internal areas by tightening the overall thermal transfer value of external walls and roofs.

The above design requirements, imposed by way of new and revised practice notes for building professionals issued by BD, are applicable to new building plans and major revisions of plans submitted to BD on or after 1 April 2011. As at 31 December 2013, about 110 approved projects had adopted the SBD guidelines in the design proposal.

The existing manpower of 101 professional and technical staff in the New Buildings Division 1 of BD are responsible for processing applications for approval of building plans as part of their overall duties in the control of new buildings and associated works on private land. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the expenditure or manpower involved solely for implementing the above package of measures to foster a quality and sustainable built environment in processing building plans.