

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)258

(Question Serial No. 6096)

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:

1. The revised estimate for 2014-15 is lower than the original estimate by 1.4%. What are the reasons for that? What is the expenditure on projects or manpower involved?
2. The estimate for 2015-16 is higher than the revised estimate for 2014-15 by 7.2%. What are the reasons for that? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?
3. What were the details of the promotion of building safety in the past three years? What were the manpower and expenditure involved?
4. What are the types of services provided to owners and occupants in both existing and new private buildings? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?
5. What were the details of the regular or surprise inspection of buildings in the past three years? What was the manpower deployment involved?
6. How many applications were received in the past three years under the Operation Building Bright implemented in collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority? What were the manpower and expenditure involved?
7. What were the details of the implementation of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) in the past three years? What were the manpower and expenditure involved?
8. How many reports on water seepage were received in the past three years? What were the manpower and expenditure involved? Did the authorities instigate any prosecution in this connection? What was the number and situation of such prosecutions?
9. Regarding the 650 buildings aged 30 years or above requiring mandatory inspection under the MBIS and the MWIS in 2015, what are the names of these buildings and the timetables for the related works? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?

10. What were the details of the publicity and public education campaign in the past three years? What were the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. 196)

Reply:

As the question comprises a number of independent sub-questions, separate headings are added to my reply below.

The revised estimate for 2014-15 and the estimate for 2015-16 (sub-questions 1 and 2)

The revised estimate for 2014-15 is lower than the original estimate by \$16.2 million (1.4%) which is mainly due to fewer mandatory inspection notices were served under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) than originally estimated. Therefore, the expenditure in engaging outsourced consultants for the schemes is lower than the original estimate.

The estimate for 2015-16 is higher than the revised estimate for 2014-15 by \$83.4 million (7.2%) which is mainly due to the additional salaries and personnel-related expenses for the increase of 152 posts in 2015-16 and the full-year effect of posts created in 2014-15 (amounting to \$64.4 million), and the increase in provision for hire of services and professional fees (amounting to \$15.5 million).

Public education and publicity (PEP) activities (sub-questions 3 and 10)

The Buildings Department (BD) had undertaken, among others, the following public education and publicity (PEP) activities in the past three years to promote building safety and foster a building safety culture -

- (a) conducting briefings for the industry, students and the general public;
- (b) uploading relevant guidelines onto BD's website and the thematic website on building safety;
- (c) organising a large-scale publicity event, namely the Building Safety Week 2015, with a wide variety of activities in mid-March 2015, as well as roadshows, comic drawing competitions for students and photo competition for the general public;
- (d) launching a mobile application for the Minor Works Control system;
- (e) broadcasting Announcement in the Public Interests (APIs) on TV, radio, buses and trains; and
- (f) producing various short video films and broadcasting them, among others, on BD's website and during BD's events.

The total expenditure for the printing of publicity materials, producing and broadcasting APIs and short films, and employing outsourced contractors and service providers to carry out the PEP activities in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 is about \$14.4 million,

\$10.2 million and \$18.1 million respectively. The related work was handled by four professional and technical staff of the Public Education and Publicity Unit of the BD, and assisted by three Information Officer Grade staff of the Information Unit of the BD as part of their overall duties in handling media and publicity matters. We are unable to provide a breakdown of the manpower resources incurred solely for the work.

Services provided by the BD (sub-questions 4 and 5)

The services provided by the BD for private buildings include, among others, implementation of the MBIS and MWIS; removing danger and nuisances caused by unauthorised building works (UBWs) (including irregularities associated with sub-divided flats and unauthorised signboards), defective drain pipes and dangerous slopes; processing minor works submissions; responding to emergency and non-emergency reports; improving fire safety measures; providing advice on restaurants and places of public entertainment licence applications; and promoting proper and timely building repair and maintenance. The work related to the provision of the above services is mainly handled by the 883 professional and technical staff and 227 clerical and general grade staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions, the Mandatory Building Inspection Division and the Minor Works and Signboard Control Section of the BD. The staff cost and departmental expenses involved in 2014-15 and 2015-16 are estimated to be \$499 million and \$512 million respectively.

The 883 professional and technical staff mentioned above are also responsible for the inspections of existing private buildings, either in response to reports received from members of the public and other government departments or through large scale operations. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower resources involved solely for carrying out the inspections.

The Operation Building Bright (OBB) (sub-question 6)

The OBB is a special one-off measure launched in 2009 amidst the financial tsunami. It aims to achieve the dual objectives of creating more job opportunities for the construction sector as well as improving building safety. There are two categories of buildings under the OBB, namely Category 1 and Category 2 target buildings. Category 1 target buildings are those which owners' corporations (OCs) are prepared to carry out repair works on a voluntary basis. The OCs of Category 1 target buildings have to apply for participating in the OBB. Category 2 target buildings are those that have difficulties in coordinating repair works, such as buildings without OCs. They do not need to apply for joining the OBB. There were a total of two rounds of applications for Category 1 target buildings under the OBB which were closed on 6 June 2009 and 24 December 2010 respectively, with a total of 1 678 applications received.

Category 1 target buildings are administered by the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority. The manpower and associated expenditure for administering the Category 1 target buildings are absorbed by the two organisations.

MBIS and MWIS (sub-questions 7 and 9)

The MBIS and MWIS were fully implemented in June 2012. From 2012 to 2014, the BD had issued 31 896 and 227 888 statutory inspection notices under the MBIS and the MWIS respectively. A breakdown is tabulated below –

	MBIS Statutory Notices				MWIS Statutory Notices			
	2012	2013	2014	Total	2012	2013	2014	Total
No. of notices issued	0	14 359	17 537	31 896	2 767	119 178	105 943	227 888

In 2012 and 2013, the implementation of the MBIS and MWIS was carried out respectively by the 488 and 493 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions and the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections of the BD as part of their overall duties to implement the BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programmes. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower or expenditure involved solely for the implementation of the MBIS and MWIS. As a result of centralisation of MBIS- and MWIS-related work in 2014, since then, the implementation of the two schemes has been solely carried out by the 110 professional and technical staff of the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections of the BD. The expenditure incurred by the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections is about \$105 million in 2014-15.

In 2015, 650 buildings will be selected for implementation of the MBIS and MWIS concurrently. As the selection has yet to be confirmed, we are not able to provide the names of the target buildings. It is estimated that the BD will issue pre-notification letters to these 650 target buildings in the second half of 2015 with statutory notices to follow in 2016. The work involved in the handling of the 650 target buildings will be carried out by 110 professional and technical staff of the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections of the BD as part of their overall duties in implementing the MBIS and MWIS. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower or expenditure involved solely for handling these target buildings.

Reports on water seepage (sub-question 8)

The BD has set up a Joint Office (JO) with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to handle public reports on water seepage in private buildings. The number of reports received, reports handled, the results of investigation, prosecutions instigated and convictions in the past three years are tabulated below –

Number of Cases	2012	2013	2014
Reports received	27 353	28 504	27 896
Reports handled ⁽¹⁾	24 553	24 856	22 056
• Cases screened out ⁽²⁾	13 727	13 062	10 961
• Cases with investigations concluded	10 826	11 794	11 095
- Seepage ceased during investigation	4 810	4 766	4 146
- Source of water seepage identified	4 053	4 692	4 816
- Source of water seepage could not be identified and investigation terminated	1 963	2 336	2 133
Prosecution instigated ⁽¹⁾	70	96	88
Convictions ⁽¹⁾	52	50	60

Note⁽¹⁾: The figures do not necessarily correspond to the number of reports received in the same year.

Note ⁽²⁾: There are cases such as unjustified cases and withdrawn cases, for which no investigation will be made by the JO.

In each of the past three years, there were 64 professional and technical staff from the BD in the JO. The expenditure incurred by the BD for the operation of the JO was \$44 million and \$47 million in 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. In 2014-15, the expenditure incurred is estimated to be \$54 million.

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