

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)297

(Question Serial No. 4764)

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:

Regarding the operation of the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Buildings Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), please inform this Committee:

1. of the number of staff in different grades and ranks in JO (including staff of FEHD) and the expenditure involved in 2016-17;
2. of the number of staff of the contractors hired by JO and the expenditure involved in 2016-17;
3. of the numbers of cases processed by JO in 2015, broken down into cases with the source of seepage identified and not identified, and the number of prosecution cases;
4. as regards continuing the consultancy study as stated under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2016-17, of the content of the study, the expenditure involved and the date when the methods for tracing the source of water seepage can be put into service.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (Member Question No. 67)

Reply:

1. In 2016-17, the operation of the Joint Office (JO) involves 64 professional and technical staff from the Buildings Department (BD) as well as 219 investigation staff from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The 64 BD staff comprise two Senior Professional Officers, ten Professional Officers, 26 Survey Officers and 26 Technical Officers, whereas the 219 FEHD staff comprise 15 Senior Health Inspectors, 128 Health Inspectors and 76 Environmental Nuisance Investigators. The estimated staffing expenditures and departmental expenses incurred by the BD and the FEHD for the operation of the JO are \$31 million and \$84 million respectively.

2. In 2016-17, the estimated expenditure for engaging ten outsourced consultants to assist in conducting professional investigation on water seepage cases is \$30 million. The JO does not compile statistics on the number of staff employed by the consultants.
3. Statistics on water seepage reports received, cases handled and results of investigation in 2015 are tabulated below –

| | Number of Cases |
|--|------------------------|
| Reports received | 29 617 |
| Reports handled ⁽¹⁾ | 25 093 |
| • Cases screened out ⁽²⁾ | 12 000 |
| • Cases with investigations concluded | 13 093 |
| - Seepage ceased during investigation | 4 920 |
| - Source of water seepage identified | 4 679 |
| - Source of water seepage could not be identified and investigation terminated | 3 494 |
| Prosecutions instigated ⁽¹⁾ | 61 |

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

Note ⁽²⁾: These include unjustified cases and withdrawn cases, in respect of which no investigation will be made by the JO.

4. The consultancy study on the latest technological methods in identifying sources of water seepage in buildings commenced in October 2014. The study researches into technological matters relating to water seepage investigation in buildings both locally and overseas. It will assess and recommend the most suitable testing methods for use in private buildings as well as help formulate technical guidelines for use by the JO. The study is expected to complete in early 2017 and the JO will then consider how best to follow up on the findings. The estimated expenditure of the study is \$4.5 million and the actual expenditure of the consultancy up to end February 2016 amounted to about \$0.8 million.

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