

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)100

(Question Serial No. 1031)

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

Question:

The imbalance in local rental housing market and soaring rents have rendered it difficult for the public to find a decent home. While sub-divided flats (SDFs) remain a serious problem, some building owners offer to let their sub-divided units in the form of “capsule-like accommodation”, modified partitioned cubicles, etc. in the name of “community housing”, which may pose serious fire and structural risk. In this connection, please inform this Committee:

1. of the current statistics on the numbers of SDFs and households involved as well as the price per square foot of SDFs, broken down by district.
2. of how the authorities will regulate the prevailing rental units in the form of “capsule-like accommodation”, modern partitioned cubicles, etc.; whether any surveys or enforcement/rectification action were carried out against such domestic units in the past financial year; if so, of the details and expenditure involved; and
3. whether the authorities will carry out large-scale surveys or enforcement action against SDFs in the coming financial year with a view to safeguarding the lives of occupants; if so, please provide the estimated expenditure and staff establishment involved.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 27)

Reply:

1. The Buildings Department (BD) does not compile statistics on the numbers of sub-divided flats (SDFs), the households involved and the price per square foot of SDFs.

2. & 3. BD takes enforcement actions against irregularities of building works associated with SDFs under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) and its enforcement policy. Where actionable irregularities are identified in SDFs in response to public reports and through large scale operations (LSOs), BD will issue removal orders to the owners concerned and consider instigating prosecution against those who fail to comply with the removal orders. In 2017, BD issued 300 removal orders for rectification of building irregularities associated with SDFs. In 2018, BD will mount LSOs in 100 target buildings for rectifying building irregularities associated with SDFs, including those for domestic use in industrial buildings.

In 2017-18 and 2018-19, enforcement actions against building irregularities associated with SDFs are carried out by 434 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions of 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 and expenditure involved solely for carrying out enforcement action related to SDFs.

- End -