

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)321

(Question Serial No. 3611)

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:

In respect of regulating domestic units in industrial buildings, please inform this Committee:

- 1) of the amount of resources allocated/to be allocated for such work in 2017-18 and 2018-19, and the expected completion time;
- 2) of the work progress of introducing legislation to regulate domestic use in industrial buildings; and
- 3) whether the Government has grasped the current numbers of industrial buildings (IB) and IB units converted to domestic use in the territory.

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 159)

Reply:

- 1) In both 2017-18 and 2018-19, enforcement action against illegal domestic use in industrial buildings (IBs) is carried out by 434 professional and technical staff of the two Existing Buildings Divisions of the Buildings Department (BD) as part of their overall duties to implement BD's building safety and maintenance enforcement programmes. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the manpower resources and expenditure involved solely for carrying out enforcement action in relation to illegal domestic use in IBs.
- 2) To strengthen enforcement action against illegal domestic use in IBs, the Government consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Development on the proposed legislative amendments to the Buildings Ordinance in June and July 2017. While Members generally acknowledged the importance of ensuring safety of the public, Members were also concerned about the proposed legislative amendments prompting the property owners to press ahead with the eviction of their domestic tenants, hence causing massive disruption to livelihood and aggravating the demand for rehousing.

Recognising the concerns of Members and the public in general, the Government considers that it may not be an appropriate time to press ahead with the proposed legislative amendments without a clear consensus in society. That said, to uphold public safety, BD is reviewing ways to improve the effectiveness of enforcement actions against illegal domestic use in IBs within the current legislative framework through improving relevant enforcement guidelines, strengthening staff training as well as the taking of more proactive investigation and prosecution in respect of illegal domestic use in IBs.

- 3) BD does not compile statistics on the number of IBs and IB units converted to domestic use in the territory.

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