

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 0137)

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 processing building plans for new buildings, would the authorities inform this Committee:

- 1 as the performance targets in 2019 for processing building plans within 60 days for new submissions, processing building plans within 30 days for re-submissions and processing within 28 days applications for consent to commence building works are lower than the actual performance in 2017 and 2018, of the reasons for setting targets lower than the actual performance;
- 2 whether the Department has any measures to improve the services in the past three years; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons; and
- 3 whether the Department has exchanged views with clients on services such as plan processing; if so, of the details; if not, of the reasons.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

- 1 The Buildings Department (BD) has all along adopted measures to facilitate applicants in obtaining approval of building plans and consent to commence building works. Specifically, if an application can be approved subject to minor amendments or furnishing of further particulars, BD will allow the applicant to make such amendments or furnish such required particulars after the stipulated target date for processing the applications. This is a practice well-accepted by the industry for streamlining the processing of applications, and is preferred to the alternative of rejecting the applications before the stipulated target date which will cost the applicants extra time and efforts to restart the entire vetting process. Having regard to the industry's trend in adopting the aforesaid approach, the target performance targets for processing building plans and consent applications for 2019-20 are set at 90%.

2 & 3 To facilitate the approval process under the Buildings Ordinance (BO), BD has been working in partnership with registered building professionals to improve its services and to provide as far as practicable facilitation in the building plan approval process. For example, BD regularly reviews and issues practice notes and circular letters as guidance to practitioners and has set up various communication platforms with industry stakeholders, such as the Building Sub-committee under the Land and Development Advisory Committee, the Authorised Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers Committee (APSEC) and APSEC discussion forum, as well as Technical Committees on various codes of practice. From 2016 to 2018, BD issued a number of new and revised practice notes and codes of practice, covering topics ranging from modular integrated construction, foundation design, structural use of concrete, glass and steel, to guidelines on the documentary proofs of site parameters when submitting building proposal and essential information in plan submissions, etc.

In addition, to facilitate the industry in ensuring their design details will comply with the requirements under the BO, BD provides enquiry service regarding compliance or interpretation of building regulations and codes of practice throughout the entire development process. BD has also put in a place a pre-submission enquiry mechanism to facilitate registered building professionals in confirming the design principles of his or her projects at an early stage so that they may avoid abortive preparation work.

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