

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)126

(Question Serial No. 0093)

Head: (82) Buildings Department

Subhead (No. & title): (227) Payment for Land Registry/Companies Registry Trading Fund services

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (YU Tak-cheung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Concerning the Operating Accounts, it is mentioned that “the increase of \$7,823,000 (24.2%) over the revised estimate for 2020-21 is mainly due to the increased requirement for ownership checks and registration in Land Registry arising from Operation Building Bright 2.0 and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme”. Under this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) The fund, manpower and resources allocated for Operation Building Bright 2.0 and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme respectively;
- (b) The major reasons for the prominent increase as mentioned and means to cut the cost involved;
- (c) The current progress and target of executing both Operation Building Bright 2.0 and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme;
- (d) Whether the Government will further enhance these two schemes and whether the Government will adopt latest information technology and digitalization so as to attain higher cost-efficiency for these two schemes.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

- (a) The work performed by the Buildings Department (BD) under Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) and Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) is to be carried out by the professional and technical staff from the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections of BD as part of their overall duties. BD is unable to provide a breakdown of the manpower and resources incurred solely for these two tasks.

- (b) The estimated increase in payment of fees to the Land Registry (LR) in 2021-22 over the revised estimate for 2020-21 is mainly due to the increase in the number of notices to be issued under MWIS arising from the increase in the number of the target buildings selected in 2020 and the issue of notices for target buildings will take place in 2021, which require ownership checks prior to issuance of the notices, and the increase in the number of target buildings for carrying out default works under OBB 2.0 in 2021 from 309 to 342 due to a one-off operation for job creation initiative under the Anti-epidemic Fund, which require registration of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) notices at LR prior to carrying out the default works. The costs incurred are based on standard rates charged by LR.
- (c) There are two categories of buildings under OBB 2.0, namely Category 1 and Category 2 buildings. Category 1 buildings are those whose owners are prepared to take up the organisation of the inspection and repair works for their buildings under the MBIS. Category 2 buildings cover those which have outstanding MBIS notices but the owners concerned have difficulties in coordinating the inspection and repair works. BD proactively selects Category 2 buildings based on risk assessment and exercises its statutory power to carry out the requisite inspection and repair works in default of owners, and seeks to recover the cost from owners concerned afterwards. As at 31 December 2020, BD has selected 636 Category 2 buildings for carrying out the requisite works in default of owners. In 2021, BD will select 342 Category 2 buildings for default works under OBB 2.0.

For Category 1 buildings, the first round and second round of applications were ended in October 2018 and October 2020 respectively. According to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), a total of 1 173 buildings have been approved as Category 1 buildings as of end December 2020. URA has been approaching the owners of the Category 1 buildings in phases to arrange the prescribed inspection and repair works under the MBIS.

As at 31 December 2020, the progress of the implementation of MWIS is tabulated below –

(i)	Number of MWIS target buildings with notices issued	10 374
(ii)	Number of MWIS notices issued	552 794
(iii)	Number of MWIS notices discharged	500 921
(iv)	Number of MWIS notices not yet expired	14 924
(v)	Number of MWIS notices expired	36 949
	Overall compliance rate (%) ((iii)/[(ii) - (iv)])	93%

In 2021, BD will target 600 buildings for the implementation of MWIS.

- (d) To facilitate on-line submission, processing and storage of data, BD has set up an electronic forms submission system under which practitioners may download, fill in, sign and submit relevant forms (i.e. the certificate of completion of the prescribed building and window inspections, prescribed building repair and prescribed repair of window) electronically. A dedicated mobile application “Quick Guide for MBIS/MWIS” has also been launched to provide information concerning the schemes, links to service providers, etc. Furthermore, issuance of MBIS/MWIS notices and their compliance status can be searched from BD website as well as the aforesaid dedicated mobile application.

In 2021, BD will continue to enhance its Building Condition Information System for recording and monitoring the progress of MWIS and OBB 2.0. Other information technology initiatives being developed include a Mobile Digital Platform to act as a market place connecting building owners, service providers and BD to facilitate early compliance of MWIS notices, and an Artificial Intelligence Chatbot at BD website to assist searching of information on MWIS. BD will continue to enhance its efficiency through simplified procedures and application of information technology in the implementation of OBB 2.0 and MWIS.

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