

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)140

(Question Serial No. 0153)

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

Question:

The Buildings Department has set a target of selecting 600 buildings for mandatory building inspection for 2021-22. According to the report issued by the Audit Commission at the end of last year, based on the above target, it will take about 20 years to complete inspection of the remaining 10 000-strong buildings covered by the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS). In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The Department increased its manpower by about 100 officers in 2020-21. Is it insufficient to speed up the relevant work? Has the Department conducted a review to help it meet the target of covering the remaining 10 000-strong buildings under the MBIS within a reasonable time?
2. 8 840 mandatory building inspection notices were issued in 2019-20 but the estimated number for 2021-22 is only 7 500. Almost 10 400 notices were discharged in 2019-20 but the estimated number for 2021-22 is only 9 000. Despite the increase in manpower, there is nearly a 16% decrease in the number of cases to be handled. What are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 188)

Reply:

1. By way of background, the Buildings Department (BD) has since 2015 reprioritised its enforcement policy for the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS). Instead of focusing on issuing new MBIS notices, priority was shifted to take enforcement action against non-compliance and provide requisite technical and financial assistance to needy owners for complying the MBIS notices. Having regard to the improved compliance rate and the implementation of the Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) since 2018 which provides assistance to owners in this regard, the BD has increased the

number of target buildings to be served with MBIS notices by 50% from 400 in 2019 to 600 since 2020.

The net increase of 106 posts in BD in 2020-21 involved the creation of 109 non-directorate posts, offset by the expiry of three time-limited posts. Among the 109 posts, 24 posts have been engaged in implementing OBB 2.0, specifically in assisting owners in disposing of the MBIS notices through the default works mechanism. It should be noted that OBB 2.0 also assists owners who undertake the works by themselves, including those who seek to comply with the MBIS voluntarily without receipt of MBIS notices. With the incentive provided under OBB 2.0, around 370 old buildings without outstanding MBIS notices have joined the second round OBB 2.0 applications.

In 2021-22, the MBIS will be implemented by 194 professional and technical staff of the Mandatory Building Inspection Sections of BD as part of their overall duties.

BD will continue to regularly review the number of buildings to be targeted each year after taking into account the manpower required to implement the scheme, the operation experience gained, market situation, feedback from stakeholders and members of the community as well as the available assistance schemes provided to the owners. In parallel, BD will continue to optimise its efficiency by streamlining the operational procedures with a view to stepping up the pace of the implementation of MBIS. Furthermore, BD will review the progress of compliance by the owners, in particular with reference to the implementation of OBB 2.0, in formulating the long term strategy for MBIS.

2. While the number of target buildings for 2020 has increased by 50% relative to that for 2019, the estimated decrease in the number of MBIS notice to be issued by BD in 2021 is due to the anticipated reduction in the number of projections on the exteriors of target buildings requiring inspection by property owners under MBIS.

On the other hand, the estimated decrease in the number of MBIS notices discharged in 2021 as compared with 2019 is due to the reduction in the number of outstanding notices as a result of continuous efforts to clear backlog in the last few years as shown in the table below –

	As of end 2018	As of end 2020
Number of outstanding MBIS notices	38 110	32 261

To step up the implementation of OBB 2.0, BD will proactively select 342 buildings with outstanding MBIS notices for the requisite inspection and repair in default of the owners under OBB 2.0 in 2021, representing an increase of 33% over 257 buildings selected in 2019. With the increase in the number of target buildings and default works to be undertaken by BD, there will be increase in workload arising from the stepped up implementation of MBIS.

- End -