

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)039

(Question Serial No. 0778)

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

Question:

Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Has the Government increased the frequency of inspection of drainage pipes in private buildings under the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic? If so, what are the manpower and expenditure involved?
2. Will the Government comprehensively review the design of drainage pipes in private buildings? If so, what are the expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hok-fung (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

1. In addition to attending to public reports on defective drains, the Buildings Department (BD) commenced in June 2020 a one-off 24-month special scheme by engaging consultancy firms to inspect the external drainage systems of all private residential or composite buildings exceeding three storeys in height (the inspection scheme). The inspection scheme covers the inspection of external drainage systems of around 20 000 private residential or composite buildings across the territory. As at the end of 2021, BD's consultants have inspected about 15 500 buildings. A total of 38 BD staff comprising professional, technical and clerical grade officers are required to implement the inspection scheme and take follow-up action under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO). \$300 million has been earmarked for the inspection scheme mainly to procure consultancy services and cover staff and other administrative cost. The funding for the inspection scheme is provided under the Anti-epidemic Fund and is outside the scope of the Appropriation Bill or the estimates of the General Revenue Account.
2. The design of the drainage system for private buildings is subject to the control of the BO and the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and

Latrines) Regulations (Cap. 123I) (the Regulation). To keep abreast of the modern-day standards and latest building technology, the Government has been reviewing the Regulation by stages. The first stage legislative amendments were completed and implemented in 2015. The second stage legislative amendments are now being pursued by BD.

The main objectives of the second stage legislative amendments are to replace the prescriptive requirements by performance-based requirements to cater for advancement in building technology and introduce a higher standard for the design of drainage systems of new buildings. In order to achieve early implementation of some of the proposed enhanced design standards of the drainage system and to allow the industry sufficient time to familiarise with the enhancements, BD issued a Practice Note for Authorized Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers (PNAP) in April 2021. BD will draw on the experience of implementing the PNAP in preparing the legislative amendments, with a target to submit the second stage legislative amendments in the next legislative session.

The review and updating of building laws, standards and codes of practice are part of BD's overall duties and no breakdown of expenditure and manpower could be provided solely for this task.

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