

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3062)

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:

The Buildings Department will establish Dedicated Processing Units (DPU) to expedite the approval of general building plan (GBP) submissions for residential projects with 500 units or more. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the estimated expenditure on and staff establishment of DPU?
2. Is there any backlog of GBP submissions arising from the epidemic? If yes, what are the details?
3. Will DPU help increase the number of cases processed? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 62)

Reply:

1. & 3. The Buildings Department (BD) established seven "Dedicated Processing Units" (DPU) in March 2023 to process general building plans (GBP) submissions for high-yield private residential projects with 500 units or more, with a target to approve about 80 per cent of GBP submissions of these projects upon their first or second submission, provided that the projects have no planning, major land or fire safety issues. DPU will adopt a "facilitator" mindset to assist relevant professionals by rendering assistance proactively and providing facilitation in an early stage, with the involvement of senior officers as appropriate, so as to expedite the approval of plan submissions.

Through redeployment of existing manpower and the creation of six time-limited professional posts in 2023-24, the DPU comprise 16 professional posts working under seven Chief Professional Officers. The processing of plan submissions by DPU forms part of the overall duties of the two New Buildings Divisions of BD in

scrutinising and approving building plans, carrying out audit checks on construction works and site safety, and issuing occupation permits upon completion of new buildings under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO). BD does not have a breakdown of the expenditure involved solely for handling submissions for high-yield residential projects by DPU.

2. During the pandemic, BD adopted numerous measures to facilitate the processing of submissions under the special work arrangement, including setting up dedicated email address to receive e-copies of documents, encouraging communication with authorized persons (AP)/registered structural engineers (RSE)/registered geotechnical engineers (RGE) through telephone, email and online conference, adopting a facilitating approach to approve plans even with non-fundamental deficiencies and requiring AP/RSE/RGE to follow up the deficiencies in subsequent amendment submissions. In 2022, 96.3% and 96.9% of new plan submissions and resubmissions respectively were processed within the time limits prescribed under the BO and the Building (Administration) Regulations (Cap. 123A), which were comparable to the percentages in past years.

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