

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 0633)

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:

Regarding the scrutiny and approval of building plans under this programme in 2022-23, please advise this Committee of the following:

In 2022-23, as regards the building plans for new buildings, how many days on average did it take for a submission by an Authorized Person to obtain approval? Does the Department have any plans to take measures to speed up the processing time? If yes, what are the specific measures? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 33)

Reply:

The time limit for processing plan submissions are prescribed in the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) and Building (Administration) Regulations (Cap. 123A). For newly submitted plans and resubmitted plans that constitute a major revision, the time limit for processing such plans is 60 days. For resubmitted plans that do not constitute a major revision, the time limit is 30 days. It may take more than one submission for an authorized person (AP) to obtain approval of a plan, and multiple approvals may be granted to different revisions of the plan during one new building project depending on the number of plan submissions made by the AP. As reference, concerning the first approval of general building plans (GBP) for new building projects submitted in 2022-23, the average number of days for AP to obtain such approval is approximately 130 days (discounting the time the AP took to revise the submission subsequent to disapprovals as applicable), which is roughly equivalent to an average of two submissions.

The Buildings Department (BD) has been adopting pragmatic measures to facilitate approval of GBP. Specifically, if plans can be approved subject to minor amendments or furnishing of further particulars, BD will allow AP to make such amendments or furnish such required particulars without rejecting the application. BD has also put in place a pre-submission

enquiry mechanism to facilitate registered building professionals in confirming the design principles of their projects at an early stage so that they may avoid abortive preparation work.

BD has also been reviewing the plan approval process regularly with a view to improving the efficiency of plan processing and facilitating the preparation of plans that meet BD's requirements. In May 2022, BD promulgated a new measure to allow the submission of essential information in GBP in three stages to commensurate with the design and construction process. This has been widely welcomed by the industry as a means to even out their effort in preparing details for GBP submissions and facilitate AP in obtaining the first approval of GBP. In view of the positive response, BD is working to further reduce essential information required in the GBP for obtaining the first approval.

In addition, BD has established "Dedicated Processing Units" (DPU) in March 2023 to process GBP submitted for private residential developments with 500 units or more. DPU will adopt a "facilitator" mindset to assist relevant professionals by providing proactive co-ordination and support services, so as to expedite the approval of plan submissions.

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