

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2004-05

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)011

Question Serial No.

1518

Head: 138 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
(Planning and Lands Branch) 000 Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands
(Planning and Lands)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question : There will be a deletion of 8 permanent posts from the establishment of the Planning and Lands Branch. However, the provision under Subhead 000 Operational expenses for salaries, allowances and other operating expenses does not decrease but rises to over \$84 million. Please state the reason.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply : The increase in operational expenses in 2004-05 is mainly due to a contingency provision to meet the cost of administering our policy portfolio and its many ongoing and new commitments as well as unforeseen requirements. This includes policy research, conducting public consultation, publicity, promotional and community activities across the spectrum of the Buildings, Lands and Planning Policy Programme. We have, for example, to provide support to the planned Advisory Committee on Enhancement of the Harbour-front to be set up shortly. As one of the tasks of the Committee is to consider means to enlist greater community participation, we will redeploy some resources to support worthwhile community participation projects aiming at enhancing the harbour-front.

The full savings (\$1.5 million) arising from the deletion of the eight posts will not be reflected in 2004-05, as the majority of the posts will be deleted towards the end of the year.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Carrie LAM

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for Housing,
Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)

Date _____ 25 March 2004