

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2004-05

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

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)015

Question Serial No.

0051

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

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 : In the coming year, the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau will oversee the implementation of measures to rectify building defects which have caused environmental hygiene problems in private buildings. What is the rank of the most senior official dealing with the task? How many members are there in the team? What is the expected number of cases to be handled and what is the estimated expenditure?

Asked by : Hon. LAU Wong-fat

Reply : The Buildings Unit in Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau headed by a Principal Assistant Secretary is responsible for the policy on building safety, including the overall monitoring of the rectification measures implemented by the Buildings Department (BD) to improve environmental hygiene. The actual implementation work is carried out by the Buildings Department and resources for this purpose are accordingly reflected under Head 82 Buildings Department.

Within BD, an Assistant Director in the Existing Buildings Division who looks after, inter alia, the implementation of hygiene improvement measures recommended by Team Clean is responsible for coordinating implementation work to rectify building defects which have caused environmental hygiene problems in private buildings. In 2004-05, BD will continue its enforcement action on drainage defects in private buildings and unauthorized building works in rear lanes and blackspots. There will be 293 existing BD staff working together with 72 contract staff recruited last year (i.e. a total of 365 staff) to implement the rectification measures as part of their enforcement duties under the Buildings Ordinance. In addition, through an outsourcing arrangement, 38 staff of the Housing Authority are also engaged in carrying out these measures.

In 2004-05, BD will take follow up enforcement action on some 3,100 buildings with drainage problems and 1,700 repair orders issued, arising mainly from the territory-wide inspection of private buildings since May 2003 to detect defective drainage pipes in the wake of the SARS outbreak. Moreover, BD will take follow up action on some 300 outstanding orders arising from the joint effort with other government departments to clear environmental blackspots since May 2003.

The expenditure incurred in implementing the rectification measures is mainly related to staff costs. As the professional and technical staff in BD are engaged in such work as part of their enforcement duties under the BO, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the estimated expenditure in terms of existing BD staff costs involved. However, BD estimates that the expenditure in 2004-05 for the 72 contract staff will be \$19 million whilst the cost for outsourcing part of the work to the Housing Authority will be \$24.4 million.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs Carrie LAM

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 23 March 2004