

Reply Serial No.

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2004-05

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

HPLB(PL)027

Question Serial No.

1250

Head : 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title) : 000
Operational expenses

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question :

- (a) Regarding the hiring of services and professional fees in the Buildings Department, please list out in details the reasons why the amount increased from over \$30 million in 2003-04 to over \$80 million in 2004-05, and what are the respective costs?
- (b) Regarding the follow-up work on repair orders and enforcement actions, would the Buildings Department consider outsourcing such work in 2004-05? What are the position regarding outsourcing contracts and short term contract staff in the Buildings Department respectively?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply:

- (a) Compared with the revised estimates in 2003-04, there will be an increase of \$49.8 million in 2004-05 for the hire of services and professional fees. The main reasons for the increase are:
 - (i) increased outsourcing in the investigation and removal of unauthorized building works (UBW) in progress, large scale clearance of UBW and investigation and monitoring of building repairs, amounting to \$24.2 million;
 - (ii) outsourcing part of the enforcement actions to the Housing Authority in respect of backlog removal orders, drainage defects in private buildings and UBW in rear lanes and blackspots, amounting to \$16.3 million; and

- (iii) carrying out consultancy studies on standards of building design and conditions of existing buildings, amounting to \$9.3 million.

- (b) The duties imposed on and the powers granted to the Building Authority under the Buildings Ordinance have to be carried out by officers of Government departments as set out in the Buildings Ordinance and cannot be outsourced. The tasks outsourced to private consultants are non-statutory services required before and after the issue of statutory orders, mainly comprising building inspections, preparation of inspection reports, drafting of statutory orders and preparation of compliance reports.

The financial amount of outsourcing contracts to accelerate enforcement work on UBW in 2003-04 and 2004-05 are \$23.5 million and \$47.7 million respectively. The number of Buildings Department staff employed on temporary contract terms at the beginning and the end of 2003-04 was 441 and 631 respectively. In 2004-05 the total number of contract staff is expected to increase to 685.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Marco WU
Post Title	Director of Buildings
Date	25.3.2004