

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

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)105

Question Serial No.

0242

Head : 118 Planning Department Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Planning

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question : The general departmental expenses of the Planning Department for 2005 are estimated at \$48,203,000, representing a large increase of about 32% over the revised estimate of general departmental expenses for 2004, which in turn represents an increase of 27% over that of 2003. In this connection, could the Government inform this Council:

- (a) the reasons for the large increase in general departmental expenses for two consecutive years;
- (b) whether large increase in the said expenses is also expected in the coming five years; and if so, what will be the annual percentage of increase; and
- (c) what measures will there be for reducing the said expenses?

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

- (a) The increases in general departmental expenses for the two consecutive years are mainly due to the implementation of the Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 (the Ordinance), which is scheduled for commencement later this year. In 2004-05, additional expenses were incurred in the preparation work for enhancing the transparency of the Town Planning Board meetings, including the fitting-out works for a public viewing room at the North Point Government Offices (NPGO) and a new Planning Enquiry Counter at the Sha Tin Government Offices. The increased expenditure was also due to the fitting-out works for enhancement of computer server rooms at the NPGO, additional expenses related to the Town Planning Board meetings (such as honoraria for Members and costs for promulgating public notices in newspapers) and other recurrent items. For 2005-06, further increase in general departmental expenses is required for promulgating public notices in newspapers, delivering the required documents/notices to the concerned parties and putting up site notices for public inspection. Besides, the expenses for minor consultancy studies previously put under a separate subhead have been subsumed under the general departmental expenses from 2005-06.

- (b) At this stage, we do not anticipate substantial increase in general departmental expenses of the Department in the next five years.
- (c) The additional anticipated expenses mentioned at (a) are mainly for meeting the statutory requirements of the Ordinance and are unavoidable. We should point out that the total estimated expenditure for the Department has been reduced from \$431.8 million in 2004-05 to \$415.3 million in 2005-06.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u> B C K FUNG </u>
Post Title	<u> Director of Planning </u>
Date	<u> 6 April 2005 </u>

[TOP](#)