

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)042

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

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question Serial No.

0137

Question : Regarding Existing Buildings, the targets for (a) “advising on restaurant licence applications under the Application Vetting Panel system within 14 days” and (b) “making existing building records available for public viewing within ten days” were both fixed at 100% whereas their actual performance rates in 2004 were 95% and 94% respectively. In this regard,

- (i) can you tell us the reasons why the actual performance rates were lower?
- (ii) has the Administration evaluated the impact on the applicants and the public?
and
- (iii) would the Administration consider increasing the manpower and expenditure so as to achieve the target?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

- (a)(i) Concerning the target for “advising on restaurant licence applications under the Application Vetting Panel system within 14 days”, whilst we will endeavour to achieve the 100% target for providing advice on the licence applications, we have set our planned performance targets for 2004, 2005 and 2006 at 95% in the light of actual experience.

For some cases, the handling time was longer than 14 days. This was mainly because we were unable to access the premises concerned for inspection or because further research into the building records was required for some complex cases.

- (ii) In all of these cases, we were able to provide our licensing requirements to the applicants before the date of the Application Vetting Panel meetings arranged by the Licensing Authority. In other words, the longer handling period has not caused delay to the Application Vetting Panel in processing the applications.
- (iii) The Buildings Department (BD) has no shortfall in manpower and expenditure for handling restaurant licence applications.

- (b)(i) Concerning the target for “making existing building records available for public viewing within ten days”, whilst we will endeavour to achieve the 100% target, we have set our planned performance targets for 2004 and 2005 at 93% and 94% respectively. In 2004 and 2005, BD achieved actual performance rates of 94% and 94.5% respectively which were slightly higher than the planned targets. In view of the actual performance in the past year i.e. 94.5%, the planned performance target set for 2006 remains unchanged at 94%.

For some cases, the handling time was longer than 10 working days. This was mainly because the required paper-based building records were being viewed by another applicant or government user and/or the manual retrieval of the paper-based records had caused occasional misplacement of records.

- (ii) The impact on the applicants and the public in these cases was considered minimal and there was no adverse feedback in this respect.
- (iii) BD has no shortfall in manpower and expenditure for handling public viewing of building records.

To address the problems which may cause the handling time to exceed 10 working days and to further enhance the viewing and copying service for building records, funding was approved in July 2003 for the installation of a computerized Building Records Management System (BRMS) in our Building Information Centre (BIC). The BRMS can provide instant inspection and copying service of building records in electronic form to members of the public. It also allows concurrent access to the same building record by more than one user, thus improving the performance in meeting the 10-day target. To take a further step forward, funding was approved in September 2003 for the development of a web-based retrieval system of the electronic building records to enable the public to gain access to the building records round-the-clock through the internet at their own premises. The web-based retrieval system is now being developed and is expected to be launched later this year.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u>CHEUNG Hau-wai</u>
Post Title	<u>Director of Buildings</u>
Date	<u>10 March 2006</u>