

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

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)051

Question Serial No.

1459

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 : Regarding the review of the operation of the pilot joint office with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to handle public complaints about water seepage problems, please advise:

- (a) the details and effectiveness of the pilot project previously implemented in Sham Shui Po District?
- (b) the numbers of the complaints in the territory about water seepage problems to be handled and already handled respectively in 2004-05?
- (c) the reasons and needs, objectives, manpower and expenditure involved as well as the anticipated effectiveness and anticipated efficiency regarding the time required for completing the entire process and indicators of this joint office?
- (d) whether the functions and the scope of work of this joint office would be expanded? If yes, what are the details of the plan, expenditure and manpower required?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply :

The pilot Joint Office (JO) in Shamshuipo has been set up since 31.12.2004, comprising 6 professional and technical staff from the Buildings Department (BD) and 7 staff from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to work together with the objective to provide a 'one-stop' service in dealing with water seepage complaints. Under the scheme, in response to a public complaint, FEHD staff in the JO would carry out initial inspections to establish the cause of water seepage. Should the source of water seepage not be identified, a further investigation by BD staff in the JO would be conducted to diagnose the source of seepage. The JO would refer the case to the Water Supplies Department for follow up if suspected defective water supply pipes are involved.

The monthly recurrent cost of the pilot JO was about HK\$365,000. Under the mode of operation of the JO, the total time required for completing the investigation of a complaint has been shortened to about 80 days and the success rate (assessed by the number of cases where the source of water seepage was identified over the total number of investigations completed) reached 69% as compared with the past success rate of 14% before the establishment of the JO, whereas the failure rate was 2%.

Building on the successful experience of the pilot scheme, the BD and FEHD will extend the JO model to the whole territory with an additional provision of \$80M to implement a three-year programme starting from April 2006. The annual operating cost of the expanded JO will be \$26M, covering a total number of 48 building professional/technical officers to be employed by BD and a budget of \$12M for outsourcing the investigation work to private consulting firms. FEHD will meet the manpower requirement of the JO through internal redeployment.

In 2005, a total of 16,180 public complaints about water seepage in the whole territory were received. As regards the breakdown of complaints to be handled and already handled, such data are not readily available.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

CHEUNG Hau-wai

Director of Buildings

11 March 2006

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