

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

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)068

Question Serial No.

1468

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 : Under "Matters Requiring Special Attention" in 2006-07, the Buildings Department will collaborate with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority in speeding up the rehabilitation of old buildings by providing technical and financial assistance to owners in need. Please provide details of the work involved.

Asked by : Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply :

We have joined hands with the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) to promote and assist in the rehabilitation of old buildings.

The HKHS had launched in February 2005 a "Building Management and Maintenance Scheme" (BMMS) to provide financial and technical assistance to owners to improve the management and maintenance of their properties. The scheme covers four areas of work, namely, education and publicity; guidance and advice; incentive and assistance, as well as an interest-free loan. Under the scheme, the HKHS helps owners of older private residential buildings to form Owners Corporations (OC), provides subsidies to owners to repair and maintain buildings aged 20 years or above; and offers interest-free loans to owners of such buildings to carry out repair and maintenance works in relation to the safety and hygiene of the flats. The HKHS has earmarked \$3 billion to implement the BMMS for a period of ten years.

The URA operates two schemes, namely the "Building Rehabilitation Extended Trial Scheme" and "Building Rehabilitation Loan Scheme" to promote preventive maintenance of domestic or composite buildings within areas targeted for urban renewal actions. Under these schemes, the URA provides technical and financial support to owners on matters like appointment of Authorised Persons and Contractors, subsidising part of the repair cost in improving the condition of common parts of the buildings and granting interest-free loans to owners to finance the renovation works to improve the conditions of the buildings. The URA has earmarked \$210 million to implement the rehabilitation schemes for a period of five years.

Whilst the Government, HKHS and URA co-operate with one another to help improve the conditions of existing buildings, there is a clear demarcation of work between the Government and the other two organisations. While we will primarily focus on carrying out inspections of buildings and law enforcement under the Buildings Ordinance, the HKHS and URA will provide technical support to owners on matters such as formation of OC, appointment of Authorised Persons and Contractors, co-ordination of loan applications and monitoring of the progress of repair and removal works. For example, under the new modality of operation of our Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme (CMBS), 150 buildings were targeted for comprehensive improvement in 2005. The Buildings Department (BD) would focus on law enforcement duties while HKHS would be responsible for providing technical and financial support to owners. In 2006, another 150 target buildings will be selected for the CMBS operation. Moreover, HKHS would play a supportive role in handling repair orders issued by BD by offering technical advice and other assistance to owners. From May 2005 to the end of 2005, BD has referred 304 cases requesting HKHS to provide assistance to owners. In 2006, we anticipate that HKHS will provide assistance to 800 buildings to which BD will issue repair orders.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

CHEUNG Hau-wai

Director of Buildings

11 March 2006

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