

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

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)071

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

Question Serial No.

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

1471

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 extend the mode of operation of the joint office with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the whole territory. Please inform the mode of operation of this joint office and its expansion plan. What are the additional manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply :

The Joint Office (JO) in Shamshuipo has been set up jointly by the Buildings Department (BD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) since 31 December 2004 with the objective to provide a 'one-stop' service in dealing with water seepage complaints. Under this new mode of operation, 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.

Under the new mode of operation, the total time required for completing the investigation of a complaint has been shortened to about 80 days. Of all the investigations completed by the pilot JO, the success rate (i.e. 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%.

Given that there is a significant increase in the success rate in detecting the sources of water seepage, the JO service will be extended to cover the whole territory. The proposed extension will be funded by 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.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

CHEUNG Hau-wai

Director of Buildings

11 March 2006

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