

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08**

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Session No. : 14

File name : S-HPLB(PL)-e1.doc

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-HPLB(PL)01	S038	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	138	Buildings, Lands and Planning
S-HPLB(PL)02	S058	CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando	82	Buildings and Building Works
S-HPLB(PL)03	S036	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	91	Land Administration
S-HPLB(PL)04	S095	LI Fung-ying	91	Land Administration
S-HPLB(PL)05	S096	LI Fung-ying	91	Land Administration
S-HPLB(PL)06	S097	LI Fung-ying	91	Land Administration
S-HPLB(PL)07	S098	LI Fung-ying	91	Land Administration
S-HPLB(PL)08	S052	WONG Kwok-hing	91	Land Administration

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)01

Question Serial No.

S038

Head : 138 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau 000 Operational expenses
(Planning and Lands Branch)

Programme : (2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and
Lands (Planning and Lands)

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question :

What is the amount of resources to be allocated by the Government to the review on New Territories Small House Policy in 2007-08? What is the timetable for the review?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Wai-Keung, Daniel

Reply :

We will continue the review of the Small House Policy. At the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau level, the work relating to the Small House Policy review is done by existing manpower resources in the Planning and Lands Branch. Because of the complexity of the policy issues involved, we are unable to give a definite timetable.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Mrs Rita Lau

Post Title _____

Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning
and Lands (Planning and Lands)

Date _____

23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)02

Question Serial No.

S058

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 Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)023 (Question Serial No. 2432) on conducting inspections to find out if there are irregularities in the facilities for people with disabilities in buildings, it is noted that the Buildings Department has redeployed additional staff to set up a dedicated team to inspect and follow up any irregularities identified during the inspections. In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of additional staff provided for the dedicated team and the additional expenditure thus involved?
2. the number of members in the team and their respective ranks?
3. the work plan of the team and its target for inspection?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando

Reply :

Since 2004, the Buildings Department (BD) has established a dedicated team under the Special Task Section and has since increased the number of target commercial buildings for annual focused inspections from 5 to 15 each year. If the approved facilities for people with disabilities in these buildings are found to have been altered or removed, the team will take enforcement actions under the Buildings Ordinance. Besides, the team also educates the owners and management companies of their responsibility, the need for rectifying the altered or removed facilities, as well as the legal liabilities should they fail to properly maintain the facilities for people with disabilities. The team also provides advice to the parties concerned to help them resolve problems that they may encounter in carrying out the rectification works. The dedicated team includes two technical staff, i.e. one Building Safety Officer and one Survey Officer (at an estimated annual cost of \$0.443 million) and is supported by other staff of the Special Task Section. Other staff members of BD also take enforcement actions in response to reports by the public on irregularities in respect of such approved facilities for people with disabilities. The work is handled by the existing manpower of BD as part of the normal duties in handling reports on unauthorised building works.

We will keep in view our inspection programme and resource requirements for this area of work in liaison with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u>CHEUNG Hau-wai</u>
Post Title	<u>Director of Buildings</u>
Date	<u>23 March 2007</u>

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)03

Question Serial No.

S036

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: The number of small house cases processed by the Lands Department maintains at around 2 000 every year. This has generated a substantial backlog. Does the Government have any plans to allocate more resources in this respect in order to improve the situation?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The Lands Department (Lands D) has pledged to process 2 300 applications per year and reduce the waiting time for commencing the processing of all new applications to not exceeding one year. In order to reduce the backlog, the Lands D has increased, through internal redeployment, the number of staff from 104 in 2005-06 to 121 in 2006-07 for processing small house applications.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)04

Question Serial No.

S095

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Regarding the Question Serial No. 1609 (Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)079), according to the Department's reply, one Senior Estate Surveyor post will be created in 2007-08 to consider the feasibility of outsourcing more land management work to improve service delivery. In this connection, please advise why the Department does not incorporate the work into the scope of duties of the management services team (MST) and for MST to implement. Is this arrangement a better way in the utilisation of resources?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The management services team (MST) and the outsourcing team are two separate setups with distinctly different duties.

The MST's work is to ensure that, in respect of land administration, actions being or have been taken are in full compliance with the guidelines, procedures and prescribed timeframe that have been set out in any departmental instructions. At the organisational level, the MST will identify areas within the existing operating systems where changes should be made to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. On the other hand, the outsourcing team's work is to examine the feasibility of outsourcing more land management work to cope with the increasing workload. The outsourcing team will also be responsible for formulating the policy on outsourcing and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)05

Question Serial No.

S096

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Regarding the Question Serial No.1611 (Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)081), please list out the increase in the number of additional new posts and their respective ranks of the Land Inspector grade in 2007-08 and the establishment number of respective ranks after the increase.

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The projected establishment changes of the Land Inspector grade in 2007-08 are as follows:

	<u>Land Inspector I</u>	<u>Land Inspector II</u>	<u>Total</u>
Existing establishment	305	225	530
<i>Time-limited posts to be deleted at end March 2007</i>	- 3	- 1	- 4
<i>Proposed new posts in 2007-08*</i>	+ 22	+ 4	+ 26
Projected establishment after the above changes	324	228	552

* *These posts were originally included in the 2006-07 Estimates for creation in early 2007 but due to the time taken to finalise the staffing structure and to carry out the recruitment work, the Department now aims to create these posts in early 2007-08.*

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)06

Question Serial No.

S097

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Regarding the Question Serial No.1611 (Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)081), what are the criteria that the Department has based on to determine the number of new posts in the Land Inspector grade to be created in 2007-08? For example, is it based on workload or departmental resources?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The creation of 26 Land Inspector grade posts in 2007-08 is part and parcel of the Lands Department (Lands D)'s efforts to strengthen its land control and lease enforcement work. The total number of new posts to be created and the distribution of the posts among various Lands D's grades are determined on the basis of both operational needs and availability of resources. Under the Lands D's staffing plan, 20 of the 26 new Land Inspector grade posts will be deployed to form ten teams to strengthen existing land control and lease enforcement operations in the New Territories. The remaining six posts will be put under a dedicated team to tackle specific targets.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	_____ PATRICK L C LAU _____
Post Title	_____ Director of Lands _____
Date	_____ 23 March 2007 _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)07

Question Serial No.

S098

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Regarding the Question Serial No.1611 (Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)081), it is noted that staff union of the Land Inspector grade objects to the creation of the relevant new posts in 2007-08. Has the Administration ascertained the reasons for it?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply:

The Lands Department (Lands D) has held a series of discussions with the concerned staff union and is fully aware of the latter's different views on the Department's staffing plan. Other staff unions of the Lands D have also offered their views. The Lands D is committed to continuing its dialogue with all the staff unions on how land control and lease enforcement work can be further enhanced and how the Department's resources could be most effectively deployed to achieve this objective.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u>PATRICK L C LAU</u>
Post Title	<u>Director of Lands</u>
Date	<u>23 March 2007</u>

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-HPLB(PL)08

Question Serial No.

S052

Head : 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer : Director of Lands

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Regarding Reply Serial No. HPLB(PL)081, please inform this Committee of:

- (a) the net increase in the number of posts and their respective ranks of Land Inspector grade in 2007-08;
- (b) the rationale for the increase of such posts; and
- (c) the reasons for creating such posts despite objections by the relevant staff union.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) The Lands Department (Lands D) plans to use its existing resources to create 22 Land Inspector I posts and four Land Inspector II posts in early 2007-08. These posts were originally included in the 2006-07 Estimates for creation in early 2007 but due to the time taken to finalise the staffing structure and to carry out the recruitment work, the Department now aims to create these posts in early 2007-08.
- (b) The creation of the above 26 Land Inspector grade posts is part and parcel of Lands D's efforts to strengthen its land control and lease enforcement work. In response to the advice of the Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands and Works and the recommendation of the Ombudsman, the Department has made a firm commitment to strengthen these two areas of work.
- (c) There is an urgent need to strengthen the land control and lease enforcement work of Lands D. The creation of 26 additional Land Inspector grade posts will help relieve the work pressure faced by the existing staff. The Department is fully aware that the concerned staff union has different views on the proposal and will continue its dialogue with the union on how land control and lease enforcement work can be further enhanced.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 23 March 2007