

**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in  
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Transport and Housing  
Session No. : 13**

<b>Reply Serial No.</b>	<b>Question Serial No.</b>	<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Head</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<a href="#">THB(H)001</a>	0331	HO Sau-lan, Cyd	62	
<a href="#">THB(H)002</a>	0527	WONG Kwok-kin	62	(5) Support Services
<a href="#">THB(H)003</a>	0525	WONG Kwok-kin	62	(3) Appeal Panel (Housing)
<a href="#">THB(H)004</a>	0634	WONG Kwok-hing	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)005</a>	0909	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	62	(5) Support Services
<a href="#">THB(H)006</a>	0910	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)007</a>	1350	CHAN Hak-kan	62	(3) Appeal Panel (Housing)
<a href="#">THB(H)008</a>	0912	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)009</a>	0913	LEONG Kah-kit, Alan	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)010</a>	1352	CHAN Hak-kan	62	(5) Support Services
<a href="#">THB(H)011</a>	1379	CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)012</a>	1380	CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)013</a>	1381	CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)014</a>	1409	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)015</a>	1410	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)016</a>	1411	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)017</a>	1412	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	(2) Private Housing
<a href="#">THB(H)018</a>	1413	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	(3) Appeal Panel (Housing)
<a href="#">THB(H)019</a>	1349	CHAN Hak-kan	62	(2) Private Housing
<a href="#">THB(H)020</a>	1848	LEE Wing-tat	62	(2) Private Housing

**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in  
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Transport and Housing  
Session No. : 13**

<b>Reply Serial No.</b>	<b>Question Serial No.</b>	<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Head</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<a href="#">THB(H)021</a>	1849	LEE Wing-tat	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)022</a>	1850	LEE Wing-tat	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)023</a>	1672	FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick	62	
<a href="#">THB(H)024</a>	2142	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)025</a>	2143	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	62	(2) Private Housing
<a href="#">THB(H)026</a>	2144	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	62	(3) Appeal Panel (Housing)
<a href="#">THB(H)027</a>	2145	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)028</a>	2270	CHAN Hak-kan	62	(5) Support Services
<a href="#">THB(H)029</a>	2364	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)030</a>	1161	CHAN Kam-lam	62	(1) Building Control
<a href="#">THB(H)031</a>	2298	CHAN Kam-lam	62	(2) Private Housing
<a href="#">THB(H)032</a>	2299	CHAN Kam-lam	62	(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
<a href="#">THB(H)033</a>	2474	WONG Kwok-kin	711	
<a href="#">THB(H)034</a>	1541	HO Sau-lan, Cyd	162	(4) Landlord and Tenant Services

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)001**

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title): 003 Recoverable  
salaries and  
allowances (General)

Question Serial No.

0331

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

In 2009-10, how much funding and manpower has been reserved under Subhead 003: Recoverable salaries and allowances (General) by the Housing Department for meeting the requirements on language support under the Race Discrimination Ordinance as well as for the need of ethnic minorities, of which how much will be used for the translation of information materials and how much for simultaneous interpretation?

Asked by: Hon. HO Sau-lan, Cyd

Reply:

Pending the announcement of the effective date of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO), the Housing Department is making preparatory work so that after the Equal Opportunities Commission has issued the related "Code of Practice", training could be provided for frontline staff on the relevant RDO provisions in order to meet the requirements on language support under the RDO for the ethnic minorities. As it may be impracticable to employ full time in-house staff with such language support expertise, we plan to obtain the required translation / interpretation services from outside bodies with such expertise. Hence, we have not included additional manpower under Subhead 003: Recoverable salaries and allowances (General) for meeting the requirements under the RDO on language support for the ethnic minorities. As regards the extra financial resources required for engaging such language support services, we would flexibly deploy resources available such that the amount can be absorbed from within our existing allocation in 2009-10.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)002**

Question Serial No.

0527

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (5) Support Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

It is stated in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2009-10 under Programme (5) that the Administration will assess the feasibility of returning prime public housing sites to the Government. Will the Administration inform us:

- (a) whether any prime public housing sites have been put under consideration for returning? If yes, please provide information on the site(s) concerned.
- (b) of the method and the present situation of the assessment?
- (c) of the estimated financial and manpower resources to be re-deployed for the assessment?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply:

- (a) The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has no intention at present to return any of its planned public rental housing (PRH) sites to the Government. With the objective to maintain the average waiting time of PRH applicants at around three years, cleared public housing sites will be retained for PRH development as far as possible.
- (b) The Government reviews regularly on a quarterly basis the land supply for public housing, the progress of public housing development projects and the amount of public housing flat production to meet the abovementioned objective, which is also the basic principle under which the feasibility of returning prime public housing sites to the Government is to be assessed. During the planning process, the HA will work closely with the Government departments and locals concerned to ensure a smooth implementation of the public housing development programme and that district development needs could be met.
- (c) In 2009-10, a provision of \$1.87 million has been reserved for the related work (including the regular reviews of PRH's supply, land search and feasibility assessment of site return), which includes the salary and staff-on-cost of the equivalent of two officers.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)003**

Question Serial No.

0525

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Appeal Panel (Housing)

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the indicator of Programme (3), please advise on the following:

- (a) Does the Appeal Panel (Housing) have any outstanding appeal cases brought forward from 2007 or before? If yes, what is the longest outstanding time of such cases and when are all the outstanding appeal cases expected to be heard?
- (b) It is expected that the number of appeal cases will reach 2 160 in 2009, but the number of hearings estimated to be conducted is only 1 800. Is there any need to defer the processing of the remaining cases to 2010? Has the Administration considered increasing the sessions and numbers of hearings to avoid a backlog of cases?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply:

- (a) At present, only one appeal case received in 2007 or before is still outstanding. The appellant concerned has not been available for hearing on health grounds. Further arrangements will be made once the appellant can appear at the hearing.
- (b) It is estimated that about 2 160 appeal cases will be received in 2009, but according to our experience, the number of hearings that need to be arranged for the appeal cases is expected to be smaller than this figure. Some appellants, while awaiting their appeals to be heard, will withdraw their appeals on their own accord or because their notices-to-quit have been cancelled/tenancies have been reinstated by the Hong Kong Housing Authority under special circumstances (for example, the appellants concerned have paid all rent arrears before hearings being arranged). The actual number of appeal cases requiring hearing is therefore less than the total number of appeals. We will continue to closely monitor the progress on the handling of the appeal cases and, if necessary, suitably increase the number of hearing sessions so as to expedite the processing of the cases to avoid backlog.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)004**

Question Serial No.

0634

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Under this Programme, the provision for 2009-10 is 13.1% (\$2 million) higher than the revised estimate for 2008-09. The Administration has said that this is because the existing vacancies will be filled in 2009-10. Please advise : -

- (a) the number of vacancies, ranks and duties involved; and
- (b) while no additional manpower is employed and the posts have already been created, why an increase of \$2 million is needed in the estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

Under Programme (4): Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance, the Housing Department (HD) is mainly responsible for providing assistance in rehousing eligible clearances affected by the Government's squatter clearances, and victims of natural disasters and other emergency incidents. The work includes vetting rehousing applications referred by the Lands Department and allocating public rental housing or interim housing to eligible applicants. The HD is also responsible for providing assistance in rehousing occupants of illegal rooftop structures displaced by the Buildings Department's enforcement actions, which includes conducting on-site freezing surveys and subsequent investigations, verifying rehousing eligibility and allocation of public housing.

Under this, the HD deploys 23 non-directorate officers to discharge the related duties in 2008-09. Compared with the approved establishment of 29 non-directorate officers, the differences are four Housing Officers and two officers of the Clerical Grade, and the revised estimate of the year is based on the salaries of the 23 non-directorate officers. Hence, the revised estimate for 2008-09 was reduced from the original estimate of \$16.5 million to \$15.3 million. In 2009-10, we estimated that 29 non-directorate officers would be required for discharging the related duties, and the related expenditure is based on the approved establishment of 29 non-directorate officers. Hence, the estimated expenditure of 2009-10 has exceeded the revised estimate of 2008-09 by \$2 million.

Same as last year, the HD will deploy its manpower flexibly in the light of operational needs to optimise its manpower resources.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)005**

Question Serial No.

0909

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (5) Support Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Under the existing policy, it is very difficult for young people to apply successfully for public rental housing (PRH). Will the Housing Department allocate provision to review and improve the current policy so as to shorten young people's waiting time for PRH while maintaining the average waiting time for family applicants at three years?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) introduced the Quota and Points System for non-elderly one-person applicants (QPS) in September 2005 to rationalise and re-prioritise the allocation of PRH to non-elderly one-person applicants to enable the HA to focus its resources on applicants with the most pressing housing needs. The HA reviewed the effectiveness and operation of the QPS in July 2007 and confirmed that the QPS had a positive impact on the rational allocation of public housing resources for more needy applicants, and re-affirmed that the QPS should continue.

We will continue to monitor the operation of the QPS with existing resources.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)006**

Question Serial No.

0910

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Under Programme (1), provision for 2009-10 is 3.6% higher than the revised estimate for 2008-09, mainly due to the increase in operating expenses. Please provide more detailed information on this.

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

Under Programme (1) Building Control the 2009-10 estimate is higher than the 2008-09 revised estimate by \$2.6M (i.e. 3.6%). The increase in expenditure is mainly attributed to the increase in Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) portfolio arising from the sale of surplus HOS flats in 2008 amounting to an increase of 4 579 units, i.e. 2.1% increase in total no. of HOS flats, which in turn increases the operational allowance required for inspection, monitoring and enforcement duties, and additional operational allowance for emergency services (new service rolled out in the last quarter of 2008) such as servicing and maintenance of safety and telecommunication equipment together with the associated administrative expenditure.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)007**

Question Serial No.

1350

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Appeal Panel (Housing)

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the indicator of the “number of appeals received”, the estimated number of cases for 2009 is 2 160, an increase of 45% as compared with the 1 488 cases in 2008. What are the reasons? On the other hand, the provision estimated for 2009-10 is the same as the revised estimate for 2008-09. Why?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply:

Since Government paid rent for public housing tenants from August to October 2008, the number of rent arrears cases dropped drastically in 2008. With the economic slowdown in 2009, it is estimated that the number of notices-to-quit issued by Housing Authority to tenants on grounds of rent arrears would increase in 2009-10, which in turn leads to an increase in the expected number of appeals.

In view of the sharp fall of appeal cases in 2008-09, we have made use of the available manpower to expedite processing of the backlog cases. At present, the waiting time for appeal hearings has been substantially shortened.

Since there is no longer a need to deploy additional manpower for processing backlog cases, we will be able to cope with the increased number of appeal cases next year with existing resources. The estimated provision for 2009-10 is therefore maintained at the same level as the revised estimate for 2008-09.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)008**

Question Serial No.

0912

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

In recent years, housing estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) have fallen into disrepair one after the other, which poses a threat to public safety. The Housing Department (HD) should be responsible for ensuring that TPS flat owners do not bear excessive maintenance expenses for the older public housing flats they have purchased. How many requests were received by HD in the past three years (i.e. 2006 to 2008) respectively from the owners for maintenance to be undertaken by the Administration? How much expenditure has been earmarked by HD for enhanced surveys for TPS buildings in the coming year (i.e. 2009-2010) so as to maintain their quality and minimise the need for maintenance in future?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

The Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department (HD) will continue to carry out the planned survey similar to the blitz operation undertaken by the Buildings Department which aims to implement large-scale clearance operation of unauthorized building works and building repairs for buildings in Home Ownership Scheme courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates. The survey aims to identify unauthorized and dangerous building works and to inspect conditions of internal common areas, external walls and drainage pipes. Upon completion of the survey, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporations to demolish unauthorized building works or demolish dangerous structures or carry out repair works within a specified period of time (usually 2 months) for improvements to the quality of buildings. In 2009, the ICU will carry out surveys for 24 buildings, including 5 buildings under TPS estates. The surveying work forms part of the normal duties of the ICU. We do not have a breakdown of the expenditure and manpower involved in carrying out this particular duty.

There is no provision under Head 62 - Housing Department for inspection and maintenance of buildings in TPS estates. We will provide the relevant information in a separate letter.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)009**

Question Serial No.

0913

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Housing Department will continue with the programme of the Planned Survey for improvements to the quality of buildings under the Tenants Purchase Scheme. What were the respective expenditures involved in the Planned Survey for the past three years (i.e. from 2006-07 to 2008-09)? What is the estimated expenditure for the coming year (i.e. 2009-10)?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

The Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department will continue to carry out the planned survey similar to the blitz operation undertaken by the Buildings Department which aims to implement large-scale clearance operation of unauthorised building works and building repairs for buildings in Home Ownership Scheme courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates. The survey aims to identify unauthorised and dangerous building works and to inspect conditions of internal common areas, the external walls and drainage pipes. Upon completion of the survey, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporations to demolish the unauthorised building works, demolish dangerous structures or carry out repair works within a specified period of time (usually two months) for improvements to the quality of buildings. The surveying work forms part of the normal duties of the ICU. We do not have a breakdown of the expenditure and manpower involved in carrying out this particular duty.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)010**

Question Serial No.

1352

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (5) Support Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

What is the progress of the assessment on the feasibility of returning prime public housing sites to the Government? What are the assessment criteria? How many sites are expected to be returned to the Government? What are the manpower and expenses involved in the assessment?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has no intention at present to return any of its planned public rental housing (PRH) sites to the Government. With the objective to maintain the average waiting time of PRH applicants at around three years, cleared public housing sites will be retained for PRH development as far as possible. The Government reviews regularly on a quarterly basis the land supply for public housing, the progress of public housing development projects and the amount of public housing flat production to meet the abovementioned objective, which is also the basic principle under which the feasibility of returning prime public housing sites to the Government is to be assessed. During the planning process, the HA will work closely with the Government departments and locals concerned to ensure a smooth implementation of the public housing development programme and that district development needs could be met. In 2009-10, a provision of \$1.87 million has been reserved for the related work (including the regular reviews of PRH's supply, land search and feasibility assessment of site return), which includes the salary and staff-on-cost of the equivalent of two officers.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)011**

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Question Serial No.

1379

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The number of cases the Independent Checking Unit has advised on the licensing/ registration applications (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools, etc.) has risen from 780 in 2007 to 929 in 2008, which represents an increase up to 19%. What is the reason for this increase? And what is the breakdown of restaurants, places of public entertainment and tutorial schools for this figure each year from 2005 to 2008?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

In accordance with the current licensing regime, various Licensing Authorities will refer licensing / registration applications to departments concerned for comments. For matters relating to structural stability and fire protection provisions, Buildings Department and the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department will give advice for private buildings and the Hong Kong Housing Authority's (HA) divested retail and commercial properties respectively. The actual number of licensing / registration applications referred to ICU from various Licensing Authorities has risen from 780 in 2007 to 929 in 2008, which represents an increase of about 19%. Though the actual reason for the increase in the number of applications may not be ascertained, we believe that it may be due to the increase in relevant commercial lettings or activities.

Since the ICU only started to assume the building control responsibility over HA's retail and commercial properties under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings in November 2005 upon the divestment of these properties, the breakdown of different types of licensing / registration applications for 2005 is not available. The numbers of licensing / registration applications referred to ICU from various Licensing Authorities from 2006 to 2008 are as follows-

<b>Type \ Year</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Restaurants/Food Business	295	458	570
Public Places of Entertainment	43	62	93
Education Institutions	69	135	164
Social Welfare Premises	93	125	102
<b>Total:</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>929</b>

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)012**

Question Serial No.

1380

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The number of advisory letters issued against unauthorised building works was 244 in 2008, a dramatic drop compared with the 1 507 advisory letters issued in 2007 and also a substantial difference from the estimated 1 400 in 2008 mentioned in the estimate for 2008-09. What are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

The Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department has completed the survey for 24 buildings in Home Ownership Scheme courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates in 2008. The survey is to identify unauthorised and dangerous building works and to inspect conditions of internal common areas, the external walls and drainage pipes. Upon completion of the survey, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporations to demolish the unauthorised building works or demolish dangerous structures or carry out repair works within a specified period of time (usually two months).

Since the courts and estates surveyed in different years are different, there would be different extent of unauthorised and dangerous building works involved in the buildings concerned, the number of advisory letters issued each year would therefore be different and cannot be directly compared with each other.

The estimated number of advisory letters to be issued in 2008 was set in light of the corresponding numbers in 2006 and 2007. The actual number of advisory letters issued was lower than the estimate is mainly because during inspection, the buildings concerned were found in better conditions than expected.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)013**

Question Serial No.

1381

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The figures related to the service provision of programmed squatter clearances or emergency clearances and the illegal rooftop structure clearance programme are estimated on the basis of the progress and timetables of the clearance programme of the Lands Department and of the enforcement actions against illegal rooftop structures taken by the Buildings Department. Compared with the 2008-09 Estimates, the 2008 estimated and actual figures show remarkable differences. What are the reasons? What are the estimated and actual expenditure and manpower incurred in respect of the programmed squatter clearances or emergency clearances and the illegal rooftop structure clearance programme in 2008?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

The actual number of rehousing applications relating to squatter clearances, natural disasters and emergency incidents in 2008 was relatively lower than estimated because a number of projects were implemented at a revised pace or deferred at the request of the works departments during the year.

Regarding the estimate for rehousing for illegal rooftop structure clearances, the number of rehousing applications to be processed is estimated by the Housing Department (HD) on the basis of the data obtained in previous years. However, the actual number of rehousing applications depends on the number of households living in the structures at the time of the clearances and whether they can arrange accommodation on their own. Hence, the estimated figures may deviate from the actual ones.

On expenditure, the original estimated expenditure for 2008-09 under Programme (4) of Head 62 was \$16.5 million whereas the revised estimated expenditure for the year was \$15.3 million, which was 7.3% less than the original estimate. The actual expenditure for the year cannot be confirmed until the close of the financial year.

For optimisation of manpower resources, the HD deployed 23 non-directorate officers to discharge the duties under Programme (4) of Head 62 in 2008 while the approved establishment for discharging the related duties as estimated for the same year was 29 non-directorate officers.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)014**

Question Serial No.

1409

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

As stated in the Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision under Head 62, the provision for 2009-10 is \$2.6 million higher than the revised estimate for 2008-09 due to the increase in operating expenses under Programme (1). Please advise us of the reason for the increase in the operating expenses and whether additional manpower is involved.

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

Under Programme (1) Building Control the 2009-10 estimate is higher than the 2008-09 revised estimate by \$2.6M (i.e. 3.6%). The increase in expenditure is mainly attributed to the increase in Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) portfolio arising from the sale of surplus HOS flats in 2008 amounting to an increase of 4 579 units, i.e. 2.1% increase in total no. of HOS flats, which in turn increases the operational allowance required for inspection, monitoring and enforcement duties, and additional operational allowance for emergency services (new service rolled out in the last quarter of 2008) such as servicing and maintenance of safety and telecommunication equipment together with the associated administrative expenditure. No additional manpower resources are sought as we shall carry out the work through internal deployment for the time being.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)015**

Question Serial No.

1410

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

It is mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention under Programme (1) that “the Independent Checking Unit will liaise with other government departments ... for any outbreak of communicable diseases in Hong Kong”. Would the Administration advise us of: the details of the above work and the manpower and expenditure involved in the past year (i.e. 2008-09), as well as the expected manpower and expenditure involved in this aspect in 2009-10?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

In case of an outbreak or suspected outbreak of communicable diseases in buildings sold under the Home Ownership Scheme and the Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department has the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings to implement a contingency measure to inspect the drainage systems of the buildings concerned in accordance with the guidelines issued, so that the Department of Health may take appropriate follow-up action. As this is a contingency measure, the ICU will suitably deploy its existing manpower and financial resources to deal with the additional work, having regard to the situation and actual need.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)016**

Question Serial No.

1411

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

It is mentioned in the relevant Brief Description that the work of the Independent Checking Unit includes attending to emergencies and carrying out enforcement action on unauthorised building works. Will the Administration advise us of: the types and numbers of unauthorised building works in the past two years (i.e. 2007-08 and 2008-09) as well as the manpower and expenditure involved; and the expected manpower and expenditure involved in this aspect in 2009-10?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

On unauthorised building works (UBW) in the Home Ownership Scheme and Tenants Purchase Scheme buildings, the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and the existing policy of the Buildings Department. In the past two years (i.e. 2007 and 2008), we have dealt with 1 825 and 1 584 cases of UBW respectively. The UBW are mainly canopies, supporting frames for air-conditioning unit and flower racks erected on the external wall of the building.

We anticipate the workload in 2009-10 is similar to the past year. Therefore, the works could be undertaken by current manpower resources. This type of work forms part of the duties of the ICU, and we do not have a breakdown of the expenditure involved in carrying out this duty.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)017**

Question Serial No.

1412

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Private Housing

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

As mentioned in the Brief Description of Programme (2), the work involves “working with the Estate Agents Authority (EAA) to further improve the calibre and professionalism of local estate agents”. Will the Administration advise us of: the details of the work concerned; the manpower and expenditure involved in the past year (i.e. 2008-09) and expected to be involved in 2009-10; and whether the department has assessed the effectiveness of the work?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has been liaising closely with the Estate Agents Authority (EAA) to further improve the quality and professionalism of local estate agents, with the objectives of ensuring that property transactions are conducted in a fair and orderly manner and in promoting the healthy development of the private residential property market. This liaison work is ongoing in nature and forms part of the duties of a Principal Assistant Secretary and a Chief Executive Officer. We do not have a breakdown on the amount of expenditure relating to the liaison work.

EAA is a self-financing and independent statutory body. Its operation does not depend on public funds. EAA's functions include issuing licences, conducting inspections on estate agency firms and the sales offices of uncompleted first-hand private residential properties, promulgating practice guidelines, conducting investigations on complaints, imposing sanctions on practitioners for non-compliance, enhancing the level of qualifying examinations of estate agents/salespersons, and implementing the Continuous Professional Development Scheme.

EAA publishes annual reports on its work progress and achievements. The annual reports are made available to the public, the Legislative Council and THB for reference.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)018**

Question Serial No.

1413

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Appeal Panel (Housing)

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the indicator of the number of appeals received, will the Administration tell us the reasons for the drastic increase in the estimated number of cases for 2009 when compared with the actual figure last year, and whether the manpower and the expenditure involved are expected to increase correspondingly?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

Since Government paid rent for public housing tenants from August to October 2008, the number of rent arrears cases dropped drastically in 2008. With the economic slowdown in 2009, it is estimated that the number of notices-to-quit issued by Housing Authority to tenants on grounds of rent arrears would increase in 2009-10, which in turn leads to an increase in the expected number of appeals.

In view of the sharp fall of appeal cases in 2008-09, we have made use of the available manpower to expedite processing of the backlog cases. At present, the waiting time for appeal hearings has been substantially shortened.

Since there is no longer a need to deploy additional manpower for processing backlog cases, we will be able to cope with the increased number of appeal cases next year with existing resources. The estimated provision for 2009-10 is therefore maintained at the same level as the revised estimate for 2008-09.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)019**

Question Serial No.

1349

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Private Housing

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

What is the progress of the sale of the surplus subsidised sale flats of the Hong Kong Housing Society? What factors are taken into account in determining the timetable for sale and the criteria for pricing? And, what is the expenditure on the maintenance of these flats?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply:

At present, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) has an unsold stock of 838 Sandwich Class Housing Scheme (SCHS) flats and two Flat-for-Sale Scheme (FFSS) flats. We will discuss with HKHS the timetable for selling these SCHS flats, taking into account factors such as the timetable for selling our remaining Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats, the local economic conditions, the demand and supply situation of the private residential property market, and market sentiments. The two FFSS flats will be sold together with the unsold stock of HOS flats in future.

In determining the prices of its subsidised sale flats, HKHS will consider the prices of comparable flats in the market and the affordability of eligible applicants.

HKHS, being a self-financing independent organisation, is responsible for the maintenance works for these flats.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)020**

Question Serial No.

1848

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Private Housing

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The matters requiring special attention in 2009-10 under Programme (2) include closely monitoring the adequacy and transparency of sales information on uncompleted residential units provided by developers. What are the details of the action plan and the timetable for such monitoring to be performed in 2009? How much manpower and resources will be involved? How many surprise inspections are expected to be conducted?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Wing-tat

Reply:

The objective of the monitoring work is to ensure that prospective buyers are provided with adequate and accurate information when purchasing uncompleted residential properties. The work involved includes monitoring whether developers have complied with the guidelines of the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (REDA) and/or the requirements under the Lands Department's Consent Scheme (Consent Scheme). It is ongoing in nature and forms part of the duties of a Principal Assistant Secretary and an Administrative Officer in the Housing Department. We do not have a breakdown on the amount of expenditure relating to the monitoring work.

In 2009-10, we will continue to, through regular inspection of sales brochures and price lists of uncompleted residential properties provided by developers to prospective buyers and surprise visits to the sales offices of uncompleted residential properties, check whether developers follow the REDA's guidelines on providing prescribed property information in the sales brochures, supplying sales brochures and price lists to prospective buyers, and adopting the standardised definition of "saleable area" in the sales brochures and the standardised price list template for all uncompleted residential properties approved under the Consent Scheme on or after 10 October 2008. The number of surprise visits will depend on actual need, including the number of properties put up for sale and the number of complaints received at the time.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)021**

Question Serial No.

1849

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Administration has estimated, on the basis of the clearance programme of the Lands Department, that the number of rehousing applications from residents affected by clearances to be processed in 2009 will reach 300. Compared with the 120 applications in 2008, it represents an increase of over 100%. Which clearance programmes are these applications involved in and what are the locations of these clearances?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Wing-tat

Reply:

The Housing Department has estimated that about 300 rehousing applications relating to squatter clearances, natural disasters and other emergency incidents will be processed in 2009. The Lands Department is responsible for the clearance programmes, the details of which would only be made public when conducting the pre-clearance registration, so as to ensure that the occupants rehoused are those who are genuinely affected by the programmes. As such, the Lands Department is unable to provide the concerned information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)022**

Question Serial No.

1850

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Administration expects that 200 offers for public rental housing and 100 offers for interim housing will be made in 2009. The two numbers have substantially increased as compared with the 80 and 40 offers respectively made in 2008. How will the Administration satisfy the relevant needs, and in which districts will the public rental housing and the interim housing units offered be located?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Wing-tat

Reply:

In accordance with the planned clearance projects of Lands Department for 2009, the Housing Department (HD) estimates that 200 offers for public rental housing and 100 offers for interim housing have to be made in the year as a result of squatter clearances and emergency clearances. The HD will flexibly deploy its manpower to handle the related duties according to actual needs to ensure the concerned clearance projects can be carried out smoothly.

The Lands Department is responsible for the clearance programmes, the details of which would only be made public when conducting the pre-clearance registration, so as to ensure that the occupants rehoused are those who are genuinely affected by the programmes. As such, the Lands Department is unable to provide the concerned information and hence we cannot confirm the locations of the public housing and interim housing units to be offered under these projects.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN \_\_\_\_\_

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009 \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)023**

Question Serial No.

1672

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Task Force on Economic Challenges (TFEC) has recently put forward various measures on job creation, such as asking the Housing Department (HD) to expedite projects on maintenance of public housing. As HD is expected to create job opportunities, will the Administration advise us of the additional expenses involved in this respect?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

Expenses for maintenance projects carried out by the Housing Department for public housing are funded by the Hong Kong Housing Authority. As such, there will not be any increase in expenses under Head 62 – Housing Department for this purpose. We will provide the relevant information in a separate letter.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)024**

Question Serial No.

2142

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

What is the progress of the Planned Survey for buildings under the Home Ownership Scheme and Tenants Purchase Scheme conducted by the Housing Department? Will there be any follow-up action upon the conclusion of the entire Planned Survey, and if yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

In mid-2004, the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department formulated a five-year survey programme for all Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates. Under the programme, the ICU would identify unauthorised and dangerous building works and inspect the condition of common areas, external walls and drainage pipes. We have completed the preliminary surveys to assess the general conditions of all buildings concerned. 160 buildings identified with more serious cases are given priority for comprehensive surveys.

Upon completion of the comprehensive surveys, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporation to demolish the unauthorised building works or carry out repair within a specified period (usually two months). The comprehensive surveys for the courts and estates are expected to be completed in 2009. Up to 2008, we have completed the comprehensive surveys for 136 buildings identified with more serious cases. The remaining 24 buildings will be completed in 2009.

Upon completion of the five-year programme, we will continue the survey for the remaining courts and estates under a rolling programme, in line with Buildings Department (BD)'s annual large scale operation programme to tackle unauthorised building and maintenance works. The surveys will be conducted following the existing guidelines of the BD.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)025**

Question Serial No.

2143

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Private Housing

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

At present, how many surplus subsidised sale flats are still held by the Hong Kong Housing Society? Have the timetable for sale and the criteria for pricing been drawn up?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

At present, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) has an unsold stock of 838 Sandwich Class Housing Scheme (SCHS) flats and two Flat-for-Sale Scheme (FFSS) flats. We will discuss with HKHS the timetable for selling these SCHS flats, taking into account factors such as the timetable for selling our remaining Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats, the local economic conditions, the demand and supply situation of the private residential property market, and market sentiments. The two FFSS flats will be sold together with the unsold stock of HOS flats in future.

In determining the prices of its subsidised sale flats, HKHS will consider the prices of comparable flats in the market and the affordability of eligible applicants.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)026**

Question Serial No.

2144

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Appeal Panel (Housing)

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the indicators of the “number of appeals received”, “number of hearing sessions”, “number of hearings arranged” and “number of appeals heard” under Programme (3), all the estimated figures for 2009 are substantially higher than the actual figures in 2008. Given that the financial provision for 2009-10 under Programme (3) Appeal Panel (Housing) remains unchanged, how can it be ensured that the quality and the processing time of the hearings will not be affected?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Since Government paid rent for public housing tenants from August to October 2008, the number of rent arrears cases dropped drastically in 2008. With the economic slowdown in 2009, it is estimated that the number of notices-to-quit issued by Housing Authority to tenants on grounds of rent arrears would increase in 2009-10, which in turn leads to an increase in the expected number of appeals.

In view of the sharp fall of appeal cases in 2008-09, we have made use of the available manpower to expedite processing of the backlog cases. At present, the waiting time for appeal hearings has been substantially shortened.

Since there is no longer a need to deploy additional manpower for processing backlog cases, we will be able to cope with the increased number of appeal cases next year with existing resources. The estimated provision for 2009-10 is therefore maintained at the same level as the revised estimate for 2008-09.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)027**

Question Serial No.

2145

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The number of rehousing applications processed by the Housing Department (HD) under programmed squatter clearances or emergency clearances has significantly increased to 300 in 2009, as compared with the actual figure of 120 in 2008. Please advise whether the existing manpower will be sufficient to cope with the increase; whether it can be ensured that the progress of processing the verification will not be slowed down in the face of the substantial increase in applications; and whether HD will allocate additional resources in this regard? If positive, the details.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The present approved establishment for discharging the duties relating to Programme (4) of Head 62 is 29 non-directorate officers, which will be sufficient to cope with the planned clearance projects in 2009. The Housing Department will deploy its manpower flexibly in the light of operational needs to ensure that quality service will be maintained and affected residents will be rehoused as soon as possible.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)028**

Question Serial No.

2270

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (5) Support Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

After the implementation of the "Quota and Points System" (QPS), the waiting time of non-elderly one-person applicants for public rental housing has become longer. Can the Administration shorten the waiting time of non-elderly one-person applicants through the provision of sufficient and suitable land for increasing the supply of one-person flats while maintaining the average waiting time for family applicants at three years? Alternatively, will the Administration deliberate on other measures to address the housing needs of the above applicants?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) introduced the Quota and Points System for non-elderly one-person applicants (QPS) in September 2005 to rationalise and re-prioritise the allocation of public rental housing (PRH) to non-elderly one-person applicants to enable the HA to focus its resources on applicants with the most pressing housing needs. The HA reviewed the effectiveness and operation of the QPS in July 2007 and confirmed that the QPS had a positive impact on the rational allocation of public housing resources for more needy applicants, and re-affirmed that the QPS should continue.

Under the current system, non-elderly one-person applicants can choose to apply together with his/her family members as general family applications. They may also apply through enhanced housing arrangements such as Harmonious Families Addition Scheme and Harmonious Families Priority Scheme so that they can live with and take care of their elderly parents. Those with pressing need for housing may apply for PRH through the Express Flat Allocation Scheme, or compassionate rehousing with recommendations by the Social Welfare Department.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)029**

Question Serial No.

2364

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The number of advisory letters issued in 2008 by the Housing Department against unauthorised building works was 244 while the estimated figure for 2009 is increased to 600. What are the reasons for such a substantial increase? Is additional manpower required to cope with the above work?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department has completed the survey for 24 buildings in Home Ownership Scheme courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates in 2008. The survey is to identify unauthorised and dangerous building works and to inspect conditions of internal common areas, the external walls and drainage pipes. Upon completion of the survey, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporations to demolish the unauthorised building works (UBW) or demolish dangerous structures or carry out repair works within a specified period of time (usually two months).

Since the courts and estates surveyed in different years are different, there would be different extent of unauthorised and dangerous building works involved in the buildings concerned, the number of advisory letters issued each year would therefore be different and cannot be directly compared with each other.

We will internally deploy manpower resources to ensure there would be sufficient resources to cope with the workload.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 19.3.2009



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)030**

Question Serial No.

1161

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Building Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the Planned Survey of buildings under the Home Ownership Scheme/ Tenants Purchase Scheme, please provide the following information:-

- (a) the names of the courts under the Home Ownership Scheme and of the estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme on which the survey has been completed, the amount of money incurred, and the subsequent follow-up maintenance; and
- (b) the names of the estates on which the above survey will be conducted in the coming three years (i.e. from 2009-10 to 2011-12) as well as the estimated amount of money to be incurred and the number of posts to be created.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Kam-lam

Reply:

In mid-2004, the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Housing Department formulated a five-year survey programme for all Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) courts and Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates. Under the programme, the ICU would identify unauthorised and dangerous building works and inspect the condition of common areas, external walls and drainage pipes. We have completed the preliminary surveys to assess the general conditions of all buildings concerned. 160 buildings identified with more serious cases are given priority for comprehensive surveys.

Upon completion of the comprehensive surveys, the ICU, under the delegated authority from the Director of Buildings, will carry out enforcement actions in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance and issue advisory letters or statutory orders to require the owners or owners' corporation to demolish the unauthorised building works or carry out repair within a specified period (usually two months). The comprehensive surveys for the courts and estates are expected to be completed in 2009. Up to 2008, we have completed the comprehensive surveys for 136 buildings identified with more serious cases. The remaining 24 buildings will be completed in 2009.

Upon completion of the five-year programme, we will continue the survey for the remaining courts and estates under a rolling programme, in line with Buildings Department (BD)'s annual large scale operation programme to tackle unauthorised building and maintenance works. The surveys will be conducted following the existing guidelines of the BD.

To encourage owners to comply with the statutory requirements and to carry out timely rectification works, we consider that publicising the list of buildings targeted for survey programme should be avoided.

This task forms part of the duties of the ICU. We do not have a breakdown of the expenditure and manpower involved in carrying out this duty. We shall continuously review the manpower resources, so required. The workload in next year is anticipated to be similar to those in the past. No additional manpower resources are required.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)031**

Question Serial No.

2298

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Private Housing

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Regarding the professionalism and service standard of estate agents, please advise us of:

- (a) the number and average age of the people who have entered the estate agents profession and passed the qualifying examination for estate agents in the past three years (i.e. from 2006 to 2008); and
- (b) the number of estate agents disqualified for various reasons in the past three years (i.e. from 2006 to 2008).

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Kam-lam

Reply:

- (a) From 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2008, 7 961 persons passed the qualifying examinations of the Estate Agents Authority (EAA) and successfully obtained estate agent's licences or salesperson's licences. The average age of these persons is about 34 years old.
- (b) From 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2008, four licence holders had their licences revoked by the EAA.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)032**

Question Serial No.

2299

Head: 62 Housing Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

- (a) How many households and residents were affected by clearances across the territory in the past three years (i.e. 2006 to 2008)? What was the proportion of such clearances being provided with local rehousing?
- (b) How many households and residents of illegal rooftop structures were displaced and required rehousing in the past three years (i.e. 2006 to 2008)? What were the proportions of such clearances being provided with permanent and temporary rehousing?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Kam-lam

Reply:

- (a) According to the records of the Housing Department (HD) and the Lands Department (LandsD), in the past three years (i.e. from 2006 to 2008), the number of households affected by squatter and emergency clearances across the territory was about 370 families (involving about 900 persons). Excluding clearances who showed no interest in applying for rehousing or who failed to meet the rehousing criteria, the rehousing applications which the HD received from the LandsD during the period 2006 to 2008 were about 320 families (involving about 600 persons). The HD does not have the breakdown of rehousing by districts for these clearances.
- (b) Between 2006 and 2008, about 1 300 households (involving about 2 700 persons) affected by clearance of illegal rooftop structures applied for rehousing. The proportion of public rental housing to interim housing for these households was about 7:3.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters Thomas C Y CHAN

Post Title Permanent Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Date 20.3.2009



- (c) The residents of the first phase of public housing development at Anderson Road are scheduled to move-in in early 2015. In order to avoid causing nuisance to future residents, the Contractor of the Anderson Road Quarry is required to complete blasting, aggregates sale and site formation works by January 2015. From January 2015 to June 2016, the Contractor will only carry out rehabilitation works at the quarry site, which will mainly involve plantation and plant establishment works and will not produce noise or air pollution.

The Anderson Road Quarry Contract is a revenue contract, which provides income to the Government. The implementation of environmental mitigation measures in the quarry site has been included in the contract and will not involve additional expenditure.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ JOHN S V CHAI

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 20.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

**THB(H)034**

Question Serial No.

**1541**

Head: 162 Rating and Valuation Department      Subhead (No. & title):

Programme:                      (4) Landlord and Tenant Services

Controlling Officer:      Commissioner of Rating and Valuation

Director of Bureau:      Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Rating and Valuation Department provides advisory and mediatory services to the public on tenancy matters. In 2004-2005, 77 staff members were deployed by the Department to handle about 180 000 applications, notices and enquiries. In 2009-2010, however, only 66 staff members will be deployed to handle about 242 000 applications, notices and enquiries. In this connection, please account for:

- (a) The reason for a drastic increase in the estimated number of applications, notices and enquiries to be received by the Department, and whether this increase is related to the amendment of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance;
- (b) The reason for the Department to deploy less manpower while facing a drastic increase in the estimated number of applications, notices and enquiries received, whether the manpower at present is sufficient for meeting the demand, and whether there are any plans to increase manpower; and
- (c) The number of enquiries related to rights of tenants affected by redevelopment schemes in the past 2 years, i.e. in 2007-2008 and in 2008-2009, respectively.

Asked by:      Hon. HO Sau-lan, Cyd

Reply:

- (a) There has been a gradual increase in the number of applications, notices and enquiries relating to tenancy matters handled by Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) over the years. The increase may be attributable to the increase in the awareness of both the tenants and the landlords on the functions of the tenancy agreements in protecting their rights and obligations under the tenancies, and on the advisory and mediatory services provided by RVD on tenancy matters.
- (b) There is a decline in work in other areas following the enactment of the amendments to the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance. The resources are flexibly deployed to handle the increase in the number of applications, notices and enquiries. There is no plan to increase the manpower.
- (c) The number of enquiries received in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 (as at end of February 2009) on redevelopment-related compensation issues were 445 and 315 respectively.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters      MRS. MIMI BROWN

Post Title      Commissioner of Rating and Valuation

Date      16.3.2009