

Our Ref.: (12) in FEHD Hy 34-105/5/2 C Pt.5
Your Ref.: CB4/PAC/CS(66,67&67A)

29 January 2018

Legislative Council
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn. : Mr Anthony Chu)
(Fax No. 2543 9197)

Dear Mr Chu,

Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 67

Joint-office operations on Water Seepage in Buildings

Thank you for your letter of 5 January 2018 concerning the captioned subject. Please find attached a consolidated response of Development Bureau, Food and Health Bureau, Buildings Department and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for the information requested at **Annex I**. Furthermore, in relation to the information given at (b) of Annex I, a Joint Office's workflow on Stage I, II and III investigation is attached at **Annex II** for members of the Public Accounts Committee's internal reference.

2. For enquiry, please contact the undersigned at telephone number 2867 5912.

Yours sincerely,



(YIP Kwok-cheung)

for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Encl.

c.c. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Fax No. : 2147 5239)
Director of Audit (Fax No. : 2583 9063)
Secretary for Development (Attn. : Mr TANG Lap-wing, Calvin)
(Fax No. : 2899 2916)

***Note by Clerk, PAC: Annex II not attached.**

Secretary for Food and Health (Attn. : Miss HO Tsz-ting, Agnes)
(Fax No. : 2136 3281)
Buildings Department (Attn.: Ms YEUNG Yee-man, Ella)
(Fax No.: 2868 3248)

Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 67**Joint-office operation on water seepage in buildings**

The setting up of a Joint Office (JO) aims to improve the coordination of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Buildings Department (BD) in handling water seepage cases. The FEHD has the enforcement power under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (PH&MS) (Cap 132) the BD possesses building-survey expertise. By and large, the collaboration of the two departments is strong, the operations of the JO smooth, and the division of work between the departments clear. Our responses to the questions raised by the Public Accounts Committee on 5 January 2018 are set out below.

- (a) With a view to strengthening the communication and coordination between BD and FEHD in handling water seepage cases, both departments have been maintaining close liaison through regular meetings at all levels viz. directorate, and working level. The meetings discuss how best to tackle complicated seepage cases (e.g. cases involving sub-divided flats) and review prevailing policies, guidelines and procedures governing the handling of water seepage complaints. To enhance the communication between JO staff of the two departments and to improve the overall efficiency of JO, JO is seeking assistance of the Government Property Agency to identify suitable office space for the setting up of four regional joint offices (one each in Hong Kong and Kowloon and two in New Territories) for co-location of both FEHD/JO and BD/JO staff.

FEHD has arranged to form a special team, led by an experienced retiree at Senior Superintendent rank, to conduct a comprehensive review on the current JO's procedural guidelines with a view to streamlining the procedures, such as the procedures in handling recurrent seepage cases, and exploring the feasibility of setting up a tribunal to deal with seepage cases in the future. Besides, the special team will also act as a focal point to liaise with relevant government departments including

BD and Water Supplies Department in tackling issues of common concern. The recruitment exercise is underway and the special team is expected to commence work in the first quarter of 2018.

- (b) As per the prevailing JO's workflow, FEHD officers will conduct initial inspection to confirm the existence of water seepage nuisance (Stage I) and also perform non-destructive tests on the drainage outlets to identify the source of seepage (Stage II). When the source of seepage cannot be identified after Stage I and II investigation, FEHD will refer the case to BD to carry out Stage III professional investigations. To facilitate BD's staff in carrying out the investigation of water seepage complaint, the powers conferred by section 126 (the general powers of entry) and section 127 (provisions for securing abatement of nuisances which may be dealt with summarily) of the PH&MS Ordinance has been delegated to concerned BD's public officers working in the JO.