

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****DEVB(PL)389****(Question Serial No. 4113)**

Head: (91) Lands Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (1) Land Administration  
Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Ms. Bernadette LINN)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question (Member Question No. 68):

Over the past five years, how many small house applications has the Lands Department received? What are the numbers of backlog cases and cases being processed? On average, how long does it take for the Department to process a small house application? What is the total area of land currently zoned "Village Type Development" and "village expansion area", and what is the area that can be used for building small houses? What are the estimated expenditure and manpower required for handling this task in 2014-15?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Ka-ki

Reply:

Over the past five years (from 2009 to 2013), the Lands Department (Lands D) received a total of 11 358 small house applications. As at end of February 2014, the number of small house applications being processed was 7 842 and the number of applications pending processing was 4 068.

In general, Lands D starts to process an application within 12 months after it is received. For straightforward applications, the processing may be completed within 24 weeks from the date of interview with the applicant. For non-straightforward applications, depending on the nature and complexity of the issues encountered such as those associated with local objections, land title or boundary problems or requirements imposed by relevant regulatory authorities which will need to be satisfied first, the processing time may exceed this period.

According to the Planning Department, the total land area covered by statutory plans is about 59 356 hectares (ha), and about 5.6% of land on statutory plans in Hong Kong (or about 3 326 ha) is zoned "Village Type Development". The land zoned "Village Type Development" includes both private land and government land, some of which may not be suitable for development, e.g. empty space of irregular shapes between houses, back lanes and narrow strips of land alongside existing developments, access roads or other amenities.

There are at present 17 active "village expansion areas" with a total area of about 41 ha. within which sites are still available for small house development.

Many small houses are built on land under private ownership, and the size of individual pieces of private land varies. Lands D does not have readily available information on the total area of land that can be available for building small houses.

It is estimated that around 100 staff will be involved in handling small house applications in 2014-15, involving an estimated staff expenditure of \$39.8 million.