

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 3595)

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:

Over the past five years, how many small house applications has the Lands Department (Lands D) received? What are the numbers of backlog cases and cases being processed? On average, how long does it take for Lands D 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 will be the estimated expenditure and manpower required for handling this task in 2016-17?

Asked by: Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. 51)

Reply:

Over the past five years (from 2011 to 2015), the Lands Department (Lands D) received a total of 12 699 small house applications. As at end of December 2015, the number of small house applications being processed was 8 800 and the number of applications pending processing was 3 934. 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 (PlanD), about 3 366 hectares (ha) of land fall within areas zoned "Village Type Development" ("V") on the statutory plans. Land under the "V" zones on statutory plans is scattered across the territory and covers existing and recognised villages in the New Territories. Many small houses are built on land under private ownership, and the size of individual pieces of private land varies. In addition, whether the development of small house may indeed proceed on a particular site within the "V" zone would depend on the fulfillment of engineering and other conditions as required. As such, the Government does not have readily available information on the total area of land available for small house developments in these "V" zones.

There are at present 16 active “village expansion areas” with a total area of about 33 ha within which sites are still available for small house development. These village expansion areas are currently zoned “V” and form part of the total area of “V” zones quoted above.

It is estimated that around 99 staff will be involved in handling small house applications in 2016-17, involving an estimated staff expenditure of \$43.4 million. Some of the staff involved are also responsible for other land administration duties.

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