Examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2020-21

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0811)

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

Question:

Regarding villagers who have been residing in such areas as Kwu Tung North and Long Valley that are to be developed into New Development Areas, what are the Government’s staff establishment and estimates involved in compiling statistics on the village households and conducting freezing surveys in these areas? It is noted that in Kwu Tung North about 60% of the villagers affected by the advance works have yet to be rehoused. What will be the improvement initiatives in this regard this year?

It is also mentioned that the Government can provide only five plots of government land unsuitable for farming for more than 30 farmers in agricultural rehabilitation. Under what circumstances would the Government consider suspending the relevant development project?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Chung-tai (LegCo internal reference no.: 42)

Reply:

The staff establishment and expenditure on salaries of staff involved in undertaking clearance and related work for Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Area (KTN/FLN NDA) in 2020-21 are estimated to be 81 officers and about $46 million respectively. Some of these staff also handle other tasks not related to KTN/FLN NDA as part of their duties and we have no separate breakdown of the proportion.

As at end of February 2020, of the 577 households affected by the first phase development of KTN/FLN NDA, about 240 have been offered with rehousing flat units about 130 have their rehousing applications under processing or pending submission of further supporting information, and about 20 households opt for cash compensation in lieu of rehousing whose
claims are under processing. About 140 households are ineligible for rehousing or compensation based on existing information due to their failure to meet the eligibility criteria including: (i) the household owns domestic property in Hong Kong; (ii) the structure currently occupied by the household is unauthorised (i.e. not registered in the 1982 squatter structure survey and not covered by any licences); or (iii) the household is an existing tenant of public housing. The remainder of about 50 households have yet to contact LandsD and provide information for eligibility assessment notwithstanding the department’s repeated approaches and invitations. All households registered in the freezing survey will be offered domestic removal allowance irrespective of their eligibility for rehousing or compensation.

LandsD will continue to make the best endeavor to handle the compensation and rehousing matters for affected clearees through efficient use of existing staffing resources including flexible redeployment and consider engaging additional manpower resources, if required, in accordance with the established resource allocation mechanism.

Late last year, about 30 farmers affected by the first phase development of KTN/FLN NDA and recorded in the Farm Operation Survey were invited to submit applications if they were interested to re-farm in five plots of government land identified under the Special Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme (SALRS). The Government is processing the applications received from 13 farmers with a view to allocating the SALRS sites to the farmers in a timely manner so as to tie in with their removal in phases starting from the latter half of 2020. Other farmers affected by the first phase development are welcome to join the SALRS. Additional suitable government sites will continue to be identified under the SALRS to facilitate relocation of farmers affected by the remaining phase of KTN/FLN NDA and other government clearance projects.

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