Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2020-21

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)130

CONTROLLING OFFICER’S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3008)

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:

1. Based on the progress of transferring squatter control duties last year, what are the current allocation of squatter control duties and manpower distribution? Will there be any restructuring of posts again?

2. Why are squatter control offices in the New Territories and in the urban area currently taken over by officers in different grades? Is expenditure on salaries the major consideration in not allowing officers in the land grades who have successfully taken over the New Territories offices to proceed to do the same for the urban offices?

3. At present, has the Lands Department abandoned the long-standing policy of deploying officers in different grades to centrally handle duties relating to resumption (land resumption), grant (land grant, land premium assessment by the Estate Management Section, lease modification and plan approval), tenancy (short-term tenancy) and control (land management, lease enforcement and squatter control) in the urban and New Territories areas?

Asked by: Hon POON Siu-ping (LegCo internal reference no.: 33)

Reply:

1 and 2. In 2006, the Lands Department (LandsD) fully took over from the Housing Department (HD) the squatter control and clearance functions. Housing Manager (HM) grade officers of HD have since been seconded to LandsD to undertake those duties which they used to discharge in HD. Since 2018, as a pilot scheme, squatter control work in Tuen Mun area has been taken up by the staff of LandsD’s grades (namely, the Land Executive and Land Inspector
grades) with a view to achieving synergy in land control work. The second phase of the pilot scheme was implemented in June 2019, whereby the duties of squatter control in the Hong Kong and Lei Yue Mun area were transferred to the Survey Officer (Estate) grade.

The above pilot scheme was implemented with reference to LandsD’s long-established work arrangements that land enforcement related duties in the New Territories are carried out by the Land Executive and Land Inspector grades, whereas those in the urban areas are carried out by the Survey Officer (Estate) grade. Expenditure or salary levels are not relevant considerations. LandsD is considering the way forward in the light of the experience of the pilot scheme.

3. LandsD all along deploys staff of various grades to undertake different duties according to their respective skills and expertise with a view to ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the discharge of such duties. The historical legacy related to work arrangements owing to merger of different offices and functions into LandsD over the years would also be taken into account. LandsD will continue to keep in view the effectiveness of its staff deployment arrangements having regard to the ongoing circumstances.

- End -