

Head 82 — BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Buildings will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2023–24 **\$1,949.7m**

Establishment ceiling 2023–24 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 096 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2023 rising by seven posts to 2 103 posts as at 31 March 2024..... **\$1,217.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 32 directorate posts as at 31 March 2023 and as at 31 March 2024.

Controlling Officer's Report

Programme

Buildings and Building Works

This programme contributes to Policy Area 22: Buildings, Lands, Planning, Heritage Conservation, Greening and Landscape (Secretary for Development) and Policy Area 31: Housing (Secretary for Housing).

Detail

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	1,875.1	1,877.9	1,877.9 (—)	1,949.7 (+3.8%)
				(or +3.8% on 2022–23 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to promote building safety; set and enforce safety, health and environmental standards for private buildings; and improve the quality of building development.

Brief Description

3 With this aim, the Department provides services to owners and occupants in both existing and new private buildings through enforcement of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO).

4 As regards existing buildings, the work of the Department includes reducing dangers and nuisances caused by unauthorised building works (UBWs) including signboards; promoting proper and timely repairs and maintenance of buildings, drainage and slopes; scrutinising and approving alteration and addition works; processing minor works submissions; improving fire safety measures in buildings; and providing advice on the suitability of premises for the issue of licences.

5 As regards new buildings, the Department scrutinises and approves building plans, carries out audit checks on construction works and site safety, and issues occupation permits upon completion of new buildings.

6 In 2022, the Department continued to take enforcement action against UBWs and to require building owners to carry out necessary repairs to dilapidated buildings. In addition, the Department:

Existing Buildings

- continued the large scale operation (LSO) on comprehensive clearance of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes in target buildings;
- continued the LSO on inspection of sub-divided flats in target domestic/composite buildings and industrial buildings, and rectification of irregularities of building works associated with the sub-divided flats;
- continued the LSO on removal of large unauthorised signboards and on removal of unauthorised signboards on target streets as well as the implementation of the Signboard Validation Scheme;
- continued to follow up pursuant to the one-off special operation to inspect the common means of escape of targeted domestic and composite buildings aged 60 or above to ensure fire and building safety;
- continued to follow up pursuant to the one-off special scheme to inspect external drainage systems of all private residential and composite buildings exceeding three storeys (Special Inspection Scheme) to protect public health and safety;

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- continued conducting village by village (V-by-V) surveys of New Territories exempted houses (NTEHs) to identify UBWs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety (First Round Targets) for priority enforcement action;
- continued the consultancy study on the use of information technology to enhance efficiency of enforcement against dangerous or abandoned signboards;
- continued the public education and publicity campaign to disseminate building safety messages to stakeholders to foster a building safety culture;
- in collaboration with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), continued to implement Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) to assist owners of old and dilapidated buildings to comply with the requirements under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) to protect public safety; and
- in collaboration with the URA, continued to implement the Building Drainage System Repair Subsidy Scheme (DRS) to assist owners of old and dilapidated residential and composite buildings to repair and/or upgrade the drains of their buildings.

New Buildings

- continued the development of the Electronic Submission Hub for accepting electronic applications submitted under the BO;
 - continued the consultancy study to formulate a new Code of Practice for Seismic-resistant Building Design Standards for the introduction of statutory seismic design requirements for new buildings;
 - continued the review of various building regulations, standards and codes of practice with a view to modernising building design and construction standards;
 - continued to prepare legislative amendments to the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulations (Cap. 123I) (B(SSFPDW&L)R) for transforming the existing prescriptive requirements to performance-based standards, as well as rationalising and updating the relevant statutory provisions; and
 - continued the consultancy study to review the current arrangement under which a development project is only required to register for Building Environmental Assessment Method Plus as a prerequisite for gross floor area concession for amenity features, with a view to further promoting green buildings in the private market.
- 7 The key performance measures in respect of buildings and building works are:

Targets

	Target	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Plan)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>				
responding to emergencies during office hours (%)				
within 1.5 hours for cases in urban areas	100	100	100	100
within two hours for cases in new towns in New Territories (N.T.) ...	100	100	100	100
within three hours for cases in other areas in N.T.	100	100	100	100
responding to emergencies outside office hours (%)				
within two hours for cases in urban areas and new towns in N.T.	100	99.6	100	100
within three hours for cases in other areas in N.T.	100	100	100	100
<i>Non-emergency services for reports on UBWs under construction</i>				
responding to reports within 48 hours (%).....	99.0	99.3	99.5	99.0

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	Target	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Plan)
<i>Existing Buildings</i>				
buildings targeted for inspection and repair as default works under OBB 2.0	300	345#	330#	330#
buildings targeted for prescribed inspection and, if necessary, prescribed repair under MBIS◇	600	601	607	600
buildings targeted for prescribed window inspection and, if necessary, prescribed window repair under Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS)◇ ..	600	603	637 ^a	600
NTEHs inspected under the V-by-V surveys for identification of UBWs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks for priority enforcement action	4 000	4 163	4 029	4 000
buildings targeted for drainage investigation and repair as default works under DRS@	350	—	439	380
buildings targeted for removal of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes ..	80	87	90	80
buildings targeted for rectification of irregularities associated with sub-divided flats including those for domestic use in industrial buildings	100	100	100	100
prescribed commercial premises inspected for improvement of fire safety measures	50	50	50	50
specified commercial buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures	20	20	20	20
composite buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures	400	400	406	400
industrial buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures	60	60	60	60
advising on restaurants and places of public entertainment licence applications under the Application Vetting Panel system within 12 working days (%)	98.0	99.9	99.7	98.0
making existing building and minor works records in electronic form available for public viewing in Building Information Centre within three working days (%) ...	100	99.2	99.5	100
<i>New Buildings</i>				
processing building plans within 60 days for new submissions (%)	90.0	95.1	96.3	90.0
processing within 30 days for re-submissions (%)	90.0	95.2	96.9	90.0
processing within 28 days applications for consent to commence building works (%)	90.0	95.3	97.5	90.0
processing within 14 days applications for occupation permits (%)	100	100	100	100

The higher numbers in 2021 and 2022 and the higher estimated number in 2023 are due to operations funded under the Anti-epidemic Fund.

◇ Buildings targeted refer to buildings selected by a selection panel each year for issuing statutory notices. If such a building is found demolished or soon to be demolished before the statutory notice is served, it will be replaced by another building from a reserve list endorsed by the selection panel.

^a The increase was due to inclusion of buildings with reports of fallen windows received in 2022 requiring inspection by property owners under MWIS.

@ New target as from 2022 after the launch of DRS in May 2021.

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Indicators

	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Estimate)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>			
emergency reports attended to	730	631φ	700
<i>Non-emergency services for reports on UBWs under construction</i>			
reports attended to	2 094	1 442φ	1 700
<i>Existing Buildings</i>			
UBWs			
reports from members of the public attended to	33 655	27 389φ	30 000
removal orders issued	10 588	16 308¶	10 000
prosecutions against failure to comply with removal orders	3 517	3 612	3 600
unauthorised structures removed and irregularities rectified	27 917	25 239§	28 000
dilapidated/dangerous buildings			
reports from members of the public attended to	17 062‡	14 814	15 000
repair/investigation orders issued	8 680¶	5 702¶	450
buildings repaired/rectified	2 135¶	4 164¶	2 000
non-compliant repair/investigation orders for default works	—	—	80
mandatory building inspection			
notices issued	7 228	13 647γ	9 000ρ
notices discharged	12 545	12 022	12 000
mandatory window inspection			
notices issued	46 605	49 930α	38 000τ
notices discharged	50 290ε	52 560ε	45 000
NTEHs			
removal orders issued for UBWs in NTEHs	883	1 264δ	1 300δ
sub-divided flats			
sub-divided flats inspected	1 727	1 656	1 650
sub-divided flats rectified of irregularities	315	501υ	300
dangerous retaining walls/slopes			
reports from members of the public attended to	283	275	280
repair orders issued	45	35β	35β
dangerous retaining walls/slopes repaired	95	95	95
prescribed commercial premises			
fire safety directions (FSDNs) issued	121	134η	130
FSDNs discharged	131	146Λ	150
specified commercial buildings			
fire safety improvement directions (FSIDNs) issued	241	375η	380
FSIDNs discharged	502	535Λ	600Λ
composite buildings			
FSDNs issued	4 190	3 601λ	3 500
FSDNs discharged	1 946	2 341Λ	2 500Λ
industrial buildings			
FSDNs issued	821	1 647Ψ	2 000Ψ
FSDNs discharged	00	119	230
licence/registration applications processed (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools etc.)	14 655	13 580	12 500
<i>Minor Works Control System</i>			
minor works submissions received	150 534	151 322	150 000
minor works submissions selected for auditing	7 207	7 033	5 100α
<i>Signboard Control System</i>			
unauthorised signboards removal orders issued	1 135	1 119	1 100
unauthorised signboards removed/validated	2 503Δ	2 255Δ	2 000
dangerous/abandoned signboards removed/repaired	1 810	1 750	1 800
reports of unauthorised, dangerous or abandoned signboards from members of the public attended to	1 785	1 929	1 800

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	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Estimate)
<i>Building Safety Loan Scheme</i>			
loan applications processed	399	588φ	500φ
loan applications approved	196	367φ	330φ
total amount of loans committed (\$m)	20.3	34.0φ	28.0φ
<i>New Buildings</i>			
new building proposals approved	220	232	240
plans processed	18 168	16 884Θ	18 000
gross floor area of proposed new buildings approved (in 1 000 m ²)	4 775Ω	3 372Θ	4 000
site inspections made	12 735	12 680	12 500
sites inspected	1 316	1 368	1 350
occupation permits issued	198	226	220

φ The decrease was due to fewer public reports received in 2022.

¶ The higher numbers in 2021 and 2022 were due to enhanced enforcement action against defective drainage system arising from the Special Inspection Scheme.

§ The decrease was due to slower progress of works arranged by building owners arising from the fifth wave of COVID-19 epidemic.

‡ The higher number in 2021 was due to more public reports received in 2021.

μ New indicator as from 2023 to undertake default works for long outstanding non-compliant repair or investigation orders by government contractors, targeting dangerous or defective buildings with potential safety hazards.

γ The increase in 2022 was due to the increase in the number of individual units with features that require inspection (e.g. protective barriers) in target buildings.

ρ The estimated decrease in 2023 is based on the decrease in the number of projections on the exteriors of target buildings selected in 2022.

κ The increase in 2022 was due to the increase in the number of units in target buildings.

τ The estimated decrease in 2023 is based on the decrease in the number of units in target buildings selected in 2022.

ε The higher numbers in 2021 and 2022 were due to stepped-up enforcement actions.

δ The increase in 2022 and the estimated increase in 2023 are due to enhanced enforcement action to clear backlog cases.

υ The increase in 2022 was due to the large number of removal orders discharged arising from redevelopment of the buildings concerned.

β The decrease in 2022 and the estimated decrease in 2023 are due to the reduction in the number of slopes identified under the risk-based priority ranking system of the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme.

η The increase in 2022 was due to issuance of superseding FSDns/FSIDns as a result of ownership change identified in the course of stepped-up enforcement actions.

Λ The increase in 2022 and estimated increase in 2023 are due to streamlining of work procedures and stepped up enforcement actions.

λ The decrease in 2022 was due to the decrease in number of units in target buildings for serving FSDns.

Ψ The increase in 2022 and estimated increase in 2023 are due to increase in the number of target buildings served with FSDns.

θ No FSDns discharged in 2021 because FSDns issued in 2021 with compliance period of one year had not yet expired.

α Starting from 2023, the number of minor works submissions selected for auditing will be determined systematically in accordance with ISO 2859-1 (Sampling Procedures for Inspection by Attributes), with more focus on quality. The percentage of submissions selected for site audit checks will be increased, while that for document audit checks will be reduced.

Δ The higher numbers in 2021 and 2022 were due to clearance of outstanding orders.

φ The increase in 2022 and the estimate in 2023 in numbers of applications processed and approved as well as the total amount of loans committed are likely due to the implementation of DRS in May 2021.

Θ The decreases in 2022 in plans processed and gross floor area of proposed new buildings approved were due to the smaller scale of building proposals processed and approved.

Ω The higher number in 2021 was mainly due to the increase in the number of new building proposals which were larger in scale.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24

8 During 2023–24, the Department will take forward initiatives in all areas of its work. In particular, it will:

- continue the LSO on comprehensive clearance of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes of target buildings;
- continue the LSO on inspection of sub-divided flats in target buildings and rectification of irregularities of building works associated with sub-divided flats;

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- continue the LSO on removal of large unauthorised signboards and on removal of unauthorised signboards on target streets as well as the implementation of the Signboard Validation Scheme;
- continue the LSO on removal of First Round Target UBWs in NTEHs and follow up the recommendations made in The Ombudsman's direct investigation report on the government's enforcement against UBWs in NTEHs;
- continue to follow up pursuant to the one-off special operation for target buildings to inspect the common means of escape of domestic and composite buildings aged 60 or above to ensure fire and building safety;
- continue to follow up pursuant to the Special Inspection Scheme to protect public health and safety;
- in collaboration with the URA, continue to implement OBB 2.0 to assist owners of old and dilapidated buildings to comply with the requirements under the MBIS to protect public safety;
- in collaboration with the URA, continue to implement the DRS to assist owners of old and dilapidated residential and composite buildings to repair and/or upgrade the drains of their buildings;
- continue to prepare legislative amendments to the B(SSFPDW&L)R for transforming the existing prescriptive requirements to performance-based standards, as well as rationalising and updating the relevant statutory provisions;
- continue the publicity and public education campaign to disseminate building safety messages to building owners, occupants, building professionals, contractors, workers, property management personnel, students and the general public, and foster a building safety culture;
- continue the review of various building regulations, standards and codes of practice with a view to modernising building design and construction standards;
- continue the consultancy study on the use of information technology to enhance efficiency of enforcement against dangerous or abandoned signboards and review its effectiveness;
- continue the consultancy study to formulate a new Code of Practice for Seismic-resistant Building Design Standards for the introduction of statutory seismic design requirements for new buildings;
- finalise and implement the new proposed gross floor area concession mechanism for amenity features, with a view to stepping up the promotion of green buildings in the private market;
- continue the development of the Electronic Submission Hub for accepting electronic applications submitted under the BO;
- contribute to the formulation of a roadmap on the industry's use of Building Information Modelling (BIM) in preparing building plans for submission to departments for approval, and develop software to extract floor area information from and conduct compliance checks on BIM files; and
- establish Dedicated Processing Units to expedite the approval of general building plan submissions for residential projects with 500 units or more, with a target to approve about 80 per cent of general building plan submissions of those projects upon their first or second submission, provided that the projects have no planning, major land or fire safety issues.

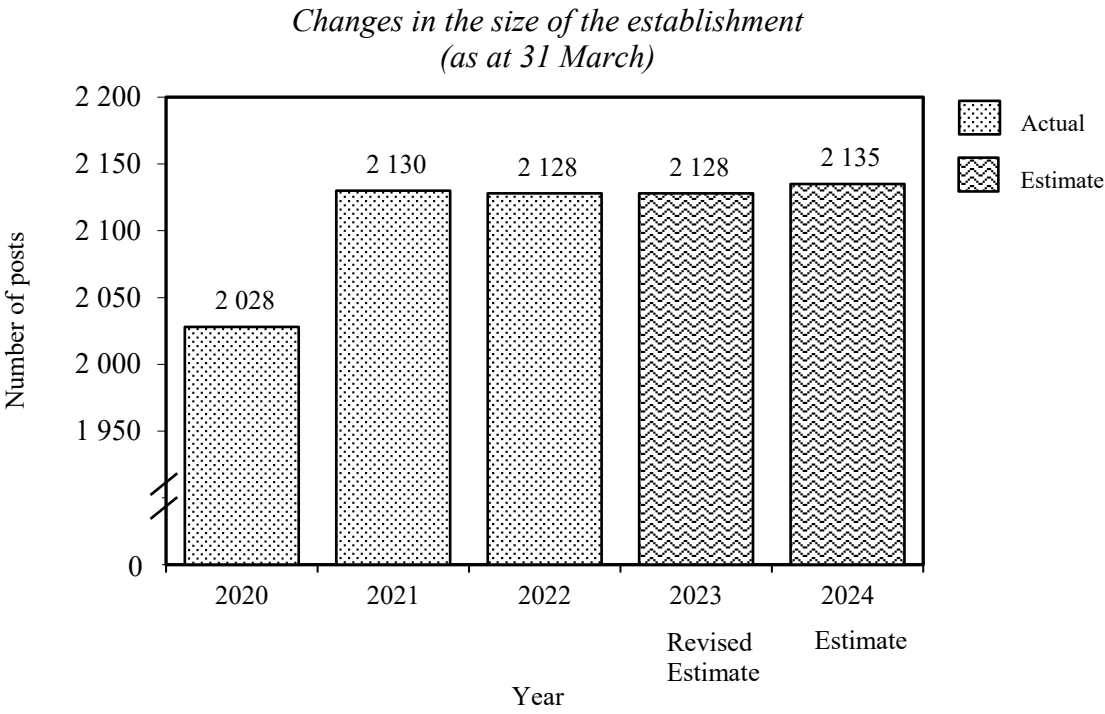
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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2021–22 (Actual) (\$m)	2022–23 (Original) (\$m)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$m)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$m)
Buildings and Building Works.....	1,875.1	1,877.9	1,877.9 (—)	1,949.7 (+3.8%)
				(or +3.8% on 2022–23 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2023–24 is \$71.8 million (3.8%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased requirement for salaries and personnel related expenses, a net increase of seven posts and increased expenses on hire of services and professional fees in 2023–24.



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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2021–22	Approved estimate 2022–23	Revised estimate 2022–23	Estimate 2023–24
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Account					
	Recurrent				
000	Operational expenses	1,838,077	1,833,771	1,836,318	1,907,543
227	Payment for Land Registry/Companies Registry				
	Trading Fund services	37,021	44,166	41,618	42,133
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	Total, Recurrent	1,875,098	1,877,937	1,877,936	1,949,676
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	Total, Operating Account	1,875,098	1,877,937	1,877,936	1,949,676
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	Total Expenditure	1,875,098	1,877,937	1,877,936	1,949,676
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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2023–24 for the salaries and expenses of the Buildings Department is \$1,949,676,000. This represents an increase of \$71,740,000 over the revised estimate for 2022–23 and \$74,578,000 over the actual expenditure in 2021–22.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$1,907,543,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Buildings Department.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2023 will be 2 128 posts including one supernumerary post. It is expected that there will be a net increase of seven posts in 2023–24. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2023–24, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$1,217,777,000.

4 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2021–22 (Actual) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Original) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	1,390,090	1,443,856	1,439,234	1,486,036
- Allowances.....	13,437	11,963	13,666	12,253
- Job-related allowances.....	478	99	453	374
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	5,674	4,680	4,083	3,890
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	130,256	152,308	149,695	169,264
Departmental Expenses				
- Hire of services and professional fees	118,103	91,354	90,492	106,836
- Contract maintenance	2,936	2,513	3,202	2,802
- General departmental expenses	177,103	126,998	135,493	126,088
	<u>1,838,077</u>	<u>1,833,771</u>	<u>1,836,318</u>	<u>1,907,543</u>

5 Provision of \$42,133,000 under *Subhead 227 Payment for Land Registry/Companies Registry Trading Fund services* is for the payment of fees to the Land Registry and Companies Registry for providing ownership information and registration of orders/notices/directions.