

Head 49 — FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2024–25 **\$11,264.3m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 11 483 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 reducing by 102 posts to 11 381 posts as at 31 March 2025 **\$4,286.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 20 directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 reducing by one post to 19 posts as at 31 March 2025.

Commitment balance..... **\$66.1m**

Controlling Officer’s Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Food Safety and Public Health	This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).
Programme (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services	These programmes contribute to Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).
Programme (3) Market Management and Hawker Control	
Programme (4) Public Education and Community Involvement	This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Environment and Ecology) and Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

Detail

Programme (1): Food Safety and Public Health

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	1,606.9	1,633.8	1,636.1 (+0.1%)	1,768.7 (+8.1%)
				(or +8.3% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to ensure that food available for human consumption is wholesome, hygienic and safe; and to safeguard public health through testing and control of live food animals and effective pest control.

Brief Description

3 The work involves:

- conducting risk assessment on food and providing timely information to the public;
- investigating and managing food incidents;
- exercising import control on high-risk food and issuing health certificates for food exports;
- exercising import control on live food animals;
- conducting inspections and tests on live food animals at licensed slaughterhouses;
- providing meat inspection services at licensed slaughterhouses;
- conducting food surveillance at various points of the food chain and taking enforcement actions;
- promoting the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach to the trade and the adoption of HACCP-based food safety plans;
- ensuring prepackaged food for sale is properly labelled;
- conducting risk assessment on pests affecting public health;

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- taking control measures to prevent vector-borne diseases; and
- investigating incidents of vector-borne diseases.

4 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
initiating investigation of reports of food unfit for human consumption within 24 hours (%)	100	100	100	100
applications for permission to import game, meat and poultry to be processed within four working days (%)λ.....	98	100	100	98
applications for permission to import milk and milk products to be processed within 12 working days (%)δ	98	96#	99	98
applications for permission to import frozen confections to be processed within 12 working days (%)ψ.....	98	97#	100	98
applications for export or re-export food health certificates to be processed within 12 working days (%)	98	99	100	98
issuing veterinary health certificates for export food containing animal products within two working days (%)	100	100	100	100
testing pigs for beta-agonists (% of lots)	100β	100	100	100
conducting inspections of farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong (no. of farms).....	35	60@	55¶	50¶
food surveillance through testing of food samples (no. of food samples tested per 1 000 population per year).....	9	9	9	9
initiating investigation of complaints about food labelling within three working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
initiating pest control measures within 24 hours upon receiving report of vector-borne diseases (%).....	100	100	99	100
dealing with complaints on wasps/ bees infestation within six working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
reducing the no. of priority rodent blackspots (%)	60η	—	65	60

λ Revised description of the previous target “applications for import of game, meat and poultry to be processed within four working days” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

δ Revised description of the previous target “applications for import of milk and milk products to be processed within 12 working days” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

Extra time was taken to process the applications during the fifth wave of COVID-19 epidemic.

ψ Revised description of the previous target “applications for import of frozen confections to be processed within 12 working days” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

β The target is revised from 98 per cent to 100 per cent as from 2024.

@ Document assessments were conducted due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

¶ A mixed mode of on-site inspections and document assessment was adopted as a post-COVID-19 epidemic arrangement. This mode of inspection will continue to be adopted in 2024.

η The target is revised from 50 per cent to 60 per cent as from 2024.

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Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
food complaints handled	4 834	6 903	6 900
applications for permission to import game, meat and poultry [^]	549	638	630
applications for permission to import milk and milk products ^φ	398	464	460
applications for permission to import frozen confections ^Ω	510	556	550
export or re-export food health certificates issued.....	305	315	310
veterinary health certificates for export food containing animal products issued.....	1 419	1 800	1 800
targeted inspections of food trucks at food control points	12 057	12 678	12 600
samples taken from food animals for testing of veterinary drug residues.....	29 996	29 613	29 600
food samples taken for testing.....	63 348	64 264	65 500
labels checked	55 192	55 208	55 200
HACCP seminars/workshops.....	33	33	33
poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks and other public places ^μ	113 083	116 227	116 200
no. of rodent trappings	78 148	93 404	93 400
mosquito breeding places eliminated.....	72 252	76 855	76 900
pest control surveys conducted	11 154	11 183	11 200

[^] Revised description of the previous indicator “applications for import of game, meat and poultry” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

^φ Revised description of the previous indicator “applications for import of milk and milk products” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

^Ω Revised description of the previous indicator “applications for import of frozen confections” as from 2023 to enhance clarity.

^μ Revised description of the previous indicator “poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks” as from 2024 to enhance clarity.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

5 During 2024–25, the Department will:

- continue to review and update local food safety standards, guidelines and regulatory arrangements such as those for veterinary drug residues and additives in food;
- continue to re-engineer the workflow, and revamp and develop new information technology systems for the Centre for Food Safety for more effective management of data in food import and food safety incidents;
- replace the existing Rodent Infestation Rate with a new Rodent Absence Rate;
- continue to implement and trial new measures to enhance and sustain the effectiveness of its rodent control work, including continuing with the overnight rodent control operations and trial use of new rodent control technologies and tools, etc.;
- strengthen co-operation with and provide necessary support for other departments and sectors to enhance rodent control; and
- continue to take forward initiatives to enhance pest control services and vector surveillance programmes to strengthen response to vector-borne diseases.

Programme (2): Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	6,530.1	6,697.2	6,680.3 (–0.3%)	6,903.0 (+3.3%)

(or +3.1% on
2023–24 Original)

Aim

6 The aim is to provide quality environmental hygiene services and facilities, and to safeguard public health through licensing and regulation of licensed food premises.

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Brief Description

7 The work involves:

- providing efficient and effective public cleansing services, including street cleansing and household waste collection, and management of public cleansing facilities such as public toilets and refuse collection points;
- licensing and inspecting food premises, and taking enforcement actions against unlicensed and unhygienic food premises;
- processing liquor licence applications and providing administrative support to the Liquor Licensing Board;
- licensing private swimming pools, commercial bathhouses, places of public entertainment, funeral parlours, undertakers, karaoke establishments in restaurants, slaughterhouses and offensive trades, and taking enforcement actions in relation to these activities;
- abating environmental nuisances relating to dripping air-conditioners and water seepage and cleaning up illegal refuse deposit blackspots;
- managing cremation and burial facilities, including public cemeteries, crematoria and columbaria; and
- regulating private columbaria under the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630).

8 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>Cleansing</i>				
completion of first round street sweeping services on main roads before 9:00 a.m. to ensure removal of over-night street litter (%).....	99	100	100	99
<i>Licensing of food premises</i>				
scheduling of Application Vetting Panel meeting for restaurant licence applicants within 20 working days from passing of initial screening (%)§	99	100	100	99
approval for issuing of food business licences within seven working days from confirmation of full compliance (%)Φ.....	99	99ω	99	99
issuing of provisional licences for restaurants and other food premises within one working day from receipt of acceptable Certificates of Compliance for submissions over the counter (%)	99	99ω	99	99
issuing of liquor licences and club liquor licences within five working days from approval by Liquor Licensing Board (%).....	99	100	99	99
<i>Licensing of private swimming pools, commercial bathhouses, places of public entertainment, funeral parlours, undertakers, karaoke establishments in restaurants, slaughterhouses and offensive trades</i>				
issuing of Letters of Requirements within seven working days from clearance with concerned departments (%).....	99	83◇	95	99
approval for issuing of licences within seven working days from confirmation of full compliance (%)α.....	99	99ω	99	99

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	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>Cemeteries and crematoria</i>				
booking of cremation sessions within 15 days (%).....	99	100	100	99
allocation of burial spaces on the day of application (%).....	99	100	100	99
<i>Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Blackspots</i>				
removal of no. of environmental hygiene blackspots under the purview of the Department (%).....	60 ^a	—	94	60
§ Revised description of previous target “holding of Application Vetting Panel meeting for restaurant licences within 20 working days from passing of initial screening” as from 2024 to enhance clarity.				
Φ Revised description of previous target “issuing of food business licences within seven working days from confirmation of compliance” as from 2024 to enhance clarity.				
ω Figure adjusted after verification.				
◇ Figure adjusted after verification. Longer processing time was required during the fifth wave of COVID-19 epidemic.				
α Revised description of previous target “issuing of licences within seven working days from confirmation of compliance” as from 2024 to enhance clarity.				
⦿ The target in 2023 was 75 per cent. It is revised to 60 per cent in 2024. The target in 2024 indicates the percentage of removal of the remaining environmental hygiene blackspots as compared to end-2023.				

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
refuse collected (tonnes)	2 231 850	2 125 860	2 125 860
recurrent expenditure per tonne of refuse collected (\$)Δ.....	300	345	345
sludge collected by gully emptiers (tonnes).....	3 250	1 980	2 100
restaurant licences	16 916	17 185	17 200
other food-related licences (e.g. liquor, food factory, bakery).....	25 470	26 031	26 000
restricted food permits (e.g. sushi and milk).....	11 010	11 249	11 200
applications for new food business licences	3 740	3 238	3 200
applications for new restricted food permits.....	2 247	2 133	2 100
inspections to food premises	252 276	268 540	268 500
raids against illegal slaughtering.....	12	12	12
prosecutions against food premises			
licensed.....	3 152	2 546	2 500
unlicensed.....	4 013	3 919	4 000
food business licences suspended/cancelled	84	115	120
courses/seminars for Hygiene Supervisors	114	104	103
applications for private swimming pools, places of public entertainment and other licences (excluding applications for temporary licences).....	113	85	90
inspections conducted to private swimming pools, places of public entertainment, etc.....	14 652	16 728	16 900
no. of cremations provided			
body.....	59 685	52 795	52 000
skeletal	2 267	2 361	2 400
no. of burials conducted			
coffin	996	822	820
urn	677	624	600
exhumation permits issued.....	4 242	4 705	4 700

Δ The figures represent unit expenditure for the respective financial years ending 31 March.

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Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

- 9 During 2024–25, the Department will:
- continue to support the Task Force on District Governance led by the Deputy Chief Secretary to eliminate the remaining environmental hygiene blackspots;
 - strengthen street cleansing, refuse collection and clearance work and step up related enforcement and prosecution;
 - continue to explore and apply new technology and automation to enhance environmental hygiene services;
 - expedite the refurbishment or facelifting projects of public toilets under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme;
 - continue to improve the design and facilities of existing public toilets in phases, and improve the planning, provision and management of public toilets;
 - enhance the hardware of refuse collection facilities in rural areas;
 - continue to implement the trial scheme to enable licensed food business to properly store refuse pending collection at rear lanes;
 - take forward proposals to streamline the food licencing regime;
 - continue to take stringent enforcement actions against unlicensed food premises and food premises which pose immediate health hazards or with illegal extension of food business areas;
 - continue to take forward plans and projects to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities;
 - continue to allocate new niches; and
 - continue to implement the Private Columbaria Ordinance by supporting the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in processing applications for a licence or other specified instruments for operating a private columbarium, and taking enforcement actions under the Ordinance.

Programme (3): Market Management and Hawker Control

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	2,303.0	2,398.7	2,332.1 (–2.8%)	2,517.7 (+8.0%)
				(or +5.0% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

10 The aim is to provide new public market facilities at suitable locations, enhance viability of and maintain a clean and hygienic environment in existing public markets, and control on-street hawking activities.

Brief Description

- 11 The work involves:
- providing new public market facilities at suitable locations;
 - managing and maintaining existing public markets, including modernisation works as appropriate;
 - inspecting public markets to ensure cleanliness and compliance with tenancy requirements and conditions;
 - controlling and containing on-street hawking activities and obstruction;
 - managing licensed hawker pitches, hawker permitted places and hawker bazaars; and
 - taking enforcement actions.

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12 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
markets with common parts cleansed at least three times a day (%).....	100	100	100	100
stalls let (%) ^θ	90 [‡]	86	84	90
responding to complaints against illegal hawking in built-up areas within 30 minutes (%).....	98	99	99	99

^θ In calculating the letting percentage, the number of stalls set aside for designated purposes has been included in the total number of stalls for letting. As at 31 December 2023, about eight per cent of stalls were set aside for designated purposes, such as to facilitate/support market improvement or modernisation works, stall repair or improvement, as well as market closure/consolidation arrangements, etc.

[‡] The target is revised from 85 per cent to 90 per cent as from 2023.

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
licensed hawkers			
fixed pitch hawkers	5 200	5 053	5 000
itinerant hawkers	304	270	260
estimated no. of unlicensed hawkers.....	804	804	800
raids by Hawker Control Teams	111 121	92 369	92 400
joint operations against illegal hawking			
with other departments	2 810	2 299	2 200
hawker blackspots	45	45	45

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

13 During 2024–25, the Department will:

- continue to plan new public market facilities at suitable locations and take forward the proposed projects;
- continue to implement and keep under review the new management model and improvement measures introduced in new and overhauled public markets;
- continue to implement the Market Modernisation Programme to improve facilities of existing public markets;
- take action to close public markets which are under-utilised;
- enhance enforcement against irregularities, cleanliness and rodent control in public markets; and
- continue to enforce against shop front extensions under the steer of the Task Force on District Governance.

Programme (4): Public Education and Community Involvement

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	73.7	75.4	74.9 (-0.7%)	74.9 (—)
				(or -0.7% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

14 The aim is to promote food safety, maintenance of a hygienic environment and green burial through partnership with the community and multimedia publicity campaigns.

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Brief Description

15 The work involves:

- enhancing public awareness of the importance of food safety and empowering consumers to make informed choices;
- educating the public on their responsibility in maintaining a clean and hygienic living environment;
- organising targeted public education and publicity programmes to mobilise community involvement and support for activities in keeping the environment clean; and
- promoting green burial as a more sustainable way to dispose of cremated human ashes.

16 The Department disseminates food safety, keep clean and green burial messages through television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs), social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, mobile applications, banners, posters, publicity stickers, pamphlets, leaflets and a publicity vehicle, as appropriate. In addition, talks and support are given at food safety and environmental hygiene activities organised by district bodies, non-governmental organisations, community groups and schools.

17 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
responding to requests from primary and secondary schools for talks on food safety and environmental hygiene within one week (%).....	100	100	100	100
responding to requests for information/ talks on food safety and environmental hygiene within one week (%)	100	100	100	100
responding to requests from day care centres and residential care homes for the elderly for talks on green burial within one week (%).....	100	100	100	100
publicity campaigns	1	1	1	1

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
seminars and activities for general public	944	1 188	1 360
television APIs	0	1	1
radio APIs.....	1	2	2
outreaching programmes targeted at schools	18	18	18
school talks on food safety and environmental hygiene	276	503	590

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

18 During 2024–25, the Department will:

- continue the efforts in promoting public health, environmental hygiene and food safety, with special emphasis on domestic hygiene, through seminars and activities, and in collaboration with District Health Centres;
- enhance publicity, public education and community engagement in rodent prevention and control;
- continue to devise and implement a strategic plan for encouraging reduced intake of salt and sugars in food to promote a healthy diet; and
- continue to promote green burial, particularly in respect of promotion of a central registration scheme.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2022–23 (Actual) (\$m)	2023–24 (Original) (\$m)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$m)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Food Safety and Public Health	1,606.9	1,633.8	1,636.1	1,768.7
(2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services	6,530.1	6,697.2	6,680.3	6,903.0
(3) Market Management and Hawker Control	2,303.0	2,398.7	2,332.1	2,517.7
(4) Public Education and Community Involvement	73.7	75.4	74.9	74.9
	10,513.7	10,805.1	10,723.4 (-0.8%)	11,264.3 (+5.0%)
				(or +4.2% on 2023–24 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$132.6 million (8.1%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to increased provision for operating expenses. There will be a net decrease of 38 posts in 2024–25.

Programme (2)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$222.7 million (3.3%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to increased provision for operating expenses. There will be a net decrease of 60 posts in 2024–25.

Programme (3)

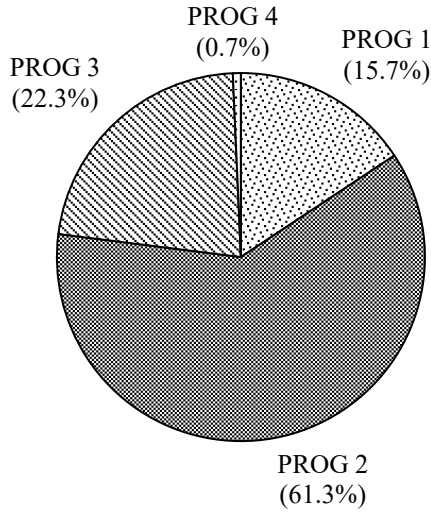
Provision for 2024–25 is \$185.6 million (8.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to increased provision for operating expenses and the increased cash flow requirement for capital account items. There will be a net decrease of five posts in 2024–25.

Programme (4)

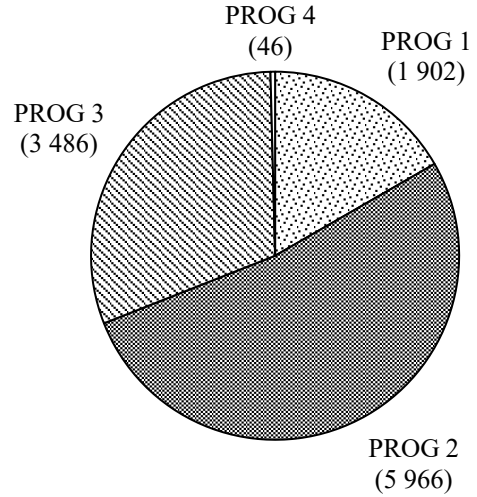
Provision for 2024–25 is the same as the revised estimate for 2023–24.

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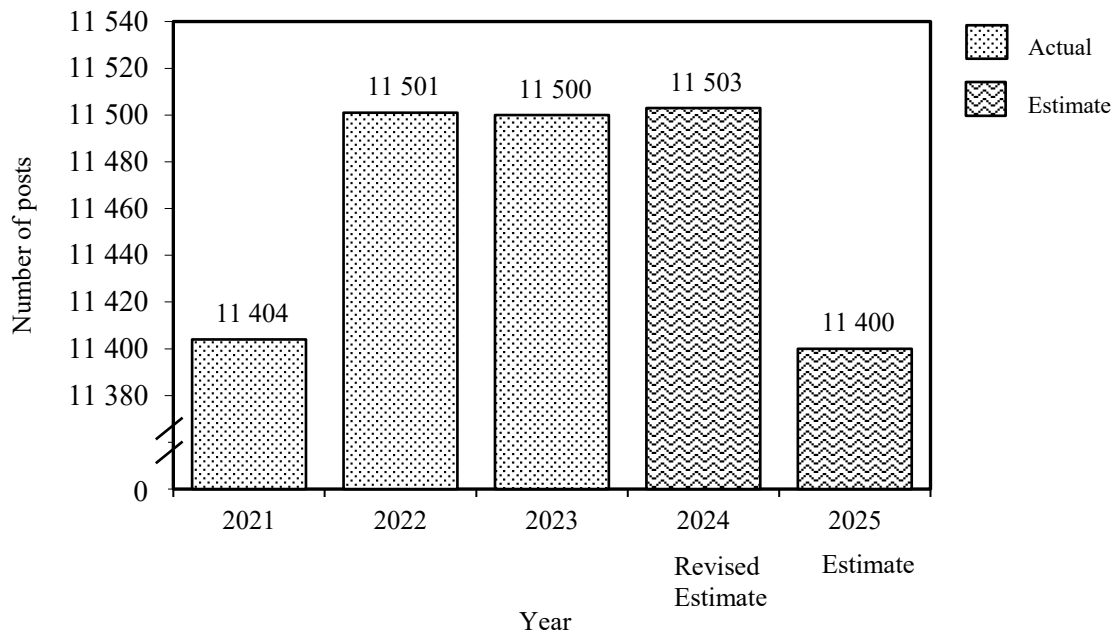
Allocation of provision to programmes (2024-25)



Staff by programme (as at 31 March 2025)



Changes in the size of the establishment (as at 31 March)



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2022–23	Approved estimate 2023–24	Revised estimate 2023–24	Estimate 2024–25	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	10,287,825	10,583,165	10,544,514	11,038,187
	Total, Recurrent.....	10,287,825	10,583,165	10,544,514	11,038,187
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	7,070	20,353	7,134	16,334
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	7,070	20,353	7,134	16,334
	Total, Operating Account	10,294,895	10,603,518	10,551,648	11,054,521
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	218,844	201,612	171,765	209,798
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	218,844	201,612	171,765	209,798
	Total, Capital Account.....	218,844	201,612	171,765	209,798
	Total Expenditure	10,513,739	10,805,130	10,723,413	11,264,319

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2024–25 for the salaries and expenses of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is \$11,264,319,000. This represents an increase of \$540,906,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$750,580,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$11,038,187,000 under Subhead 000 Operational expenses is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2024 will be 11 503 posts including four supernumerary posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of 103 posts including one supernumerary post in 2024–25. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2024–25, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$4,286,754,000.

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

	2022–23 (Actual) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Original) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	3,955,938	4,032,229	4,109,196	4,265,535
- Allowances	59,410	66,984	61,373	67,373
- Job-related allowances.....	88,942	95,976	96,791	96,791
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	27,315	25,273	24,329	26,960
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	356,348	414,444	400,846	460,659
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	5,799,553	5,947,926	5,851,632	6,120,495
Other Charges				
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission.....	319	333	347	374
	10,287,825	10,583,165	10,544,514	11,038,187

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

5 Provision of \$209,798,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents an increase of \$38,033,000 (22.1%) over the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to increased funding requirement for replacement of air conditioning systems and other minor plant and equipment.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2023	Revised estimated expenditure for 2023–24	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	858	Ex-gratia payment to Food and Environmental Hygiene Department market tenants affected by market development plans	100,000	28,107	5,814	66,079
		Total	100,000	28,107	5,814	66,079