

Head 82 — BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

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

Estimate 2024–25 **\$2,110.1m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 103 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 rising by 14 posts to 2 117 posts as at 31 March 2025..... **\$1,287.2m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 32 directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025.

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

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	1,877.8	1,949.7	2,005.5 (+2.9%)	2,110.1 (+5.2%)
				(or +8.2% on 2023–24 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 the 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 2023, the Department continued to take enforcement action against UBWs and to require building owners to carry out necessary inspection and 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, as well as unauthorised basements 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;
- completed 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, including information against unauthorised removal or alteration of structural walls in domestic premises, 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), and initiated tripartite efforts with the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the URA to collaboratively assist owners of old and dilapidated buildings to comply with the requirements of 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

- launched Stage 2 of the Electronic Submission Hub (ESH) and continued the development of the final Stage 3 of the ESH for accepting electronic submissions under the BO;
- continued to develop a Building Information Modelling (BIM) plug-in tool to facilitate automated checking of area calculations of general building plan submissions;
- 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;
- promulgated a new performance-based gross floor area (GFA) concession mechanism requiring new development projects granted with GFA concession for green and amenity features to achieve a specific rating under the Building Environmental Assessment Method Plus so as to further promote green buildings; and
- established Dedicated Processing Units (DPUs) to expedite the processing of general building plan submissions for residential projects with 500 units or more.

7 The key performance measures in respect of buildings and building works are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>				
responding to emergencies during office hours (%)				
within 1.5 hours for cases in urban areas	100	100	99.8	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	100	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	99.5	99.4	99.0

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	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>Existing Buildings</i>				
buildings targeted for inspection and repair as default works under OBB 2.0	300	330#	333#	300
buildings targeted for prescribed inspection and, if necessary, prescribed repair under MBIS◇	600	607	600	600
buildings targeted for prescribed window inspection and, if necessary, prescribed window repair under Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS)◇ ..	600	637 ^a	600	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	4 029	4 221	6 500^Λ
buildings targeted for drainage investigation and repair as default works under DRS	350	439	384	350
buildings targeted for removal of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards, lanes and basementsΩ	80	90	95	90
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/domestic buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures †	400	406	402	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	99.7	99.0	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	99.5	100	100
<i>New Buildings</i>				
processing building plans within 60 days for new submissions (%)	90.0	96.3	97.7	90.0
within 30 days for re-submissions (%)	90.0	96.9	98.7	90.0
processing within 28 days applications for consent to commence building works (%)	90.0	97.5	98.7	90.0
approving general building plan submissions of high-yield residential projects on the first or second submission (%) γ	80	—	100	80
processing within 14 days applications for occupation permits (%)	100	100	100	100

The higher numbers in 2022 and 2023 were 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.

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- ⊖ The higher number in 2022 was due to inclusion of more buildings with reports of fallen windows received in 2022 requiring inspection by property owners under the MWIS.
- ^ The higher estimated number in 2024 is due to enhanced use of drones and streamlined workflow in carrying out the V-by-V surveys.
- Ω Revised description of the previous target “buildings targeted for removal of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes” as from 2024 to clarify that the coverage of UBWs includes basement.
- ‡ Revised description of the previous target “composite buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures” as from 2024. In accordance with the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (FS(B)O), a phased approach is adopted in implementing the fire safety improvement programme. Inspection of target domestic buildings will commence in 2024 after the completion of inspection of all target composite buildings.
- γ New target as from 2023 when DPUs were set up in March 2023 for residential projects with 500 units or more and not involving major planning, land or fire safety issues.

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>			
emergency reports attended to	631	983Ω	700
<i>Non-emergency services for reports on UBWs under construction</i>			
reports attended to	1 442	1 193φ	1 100
<i>Existing Buildings</i>			
<i>UBWs</i>			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	27 389	29 914	30 000
removal orders issued	16 308	9 109¶	10 000
prosecutions against failure to comply with removal orders.....	3 612	4 395ω	3 600
unauthorised structures removed and irregularities rectified	25 239§	29 585	30 000
<i>dilapidated/dangerous buildings</i>			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	14 814	17 626Φ	17 000Φ
repair/investigation orders issued	5 702	848¶	800
buildings repaired/rectified.....	4 164	2 501¶	2 500
non-compliant repair/investigation orders for default worksυ	—	83	140ψ
<i>mandatory building inspection</i>			
notices issued to owners of target buildings^.....	13 647	8 374ρ	5 000ρ
notices discharged	12 022	14 070⊖	12 000
prosecutions against failure to comply with noticesη....	—	—	2 500
<i>mandatory window inspection</i>			
notices issued to owners of target buildings^.....	49 930	32 588□	36 000τ
notices discharged	52 560ε	41 777	45 000
prosecutions against failure to comply with noticesη....	—	—	250
<i>NTEHs</i>			
removal orders issued for UBWs in NTEHs	1 264	1 633δ	1 300
<i>sub-divided flats</i>			
sub-divided flats inspected	1 656	1 719	1 650
sub-divided flats rectified of irregularities	501ν	323	320
<i>dangerous retaining walls/slopes</i>			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	275	543@	280
repair orders issued.....	35	45β	45β
dangerous retaining walls/slopes repaired.....	95	95	95
<i>prescribed commercial premises</i>			
fire safety directions (FSDns) issued.....	134	133	130
FSDns discharged.....	146	160Λ	170Λ
<i>specified commercial buildings</i>			
fire safety improvement directions (FSIDns) issued.....	375	342	340
FSIDns discharged.....	535	622γ	620
<i>composite/domestic buildings‡</i>			
FSDns issued	3 601	4 477λ	4 000◇
FSDns discharged.....	2 341	3 377γ	3 450
<i>industrial buildings</i>			
FSDns issued	1 647	2 067Ψ	1 500◇
FSDns discharged.....	119	288Λ	350Λ
<i>licence/registration applications processed (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools etc.).....</i>	13 580	12 879	12 500

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	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
<i>Minor Works Control System</i>			
minor works submissions received.....	151 322	146 831	150 000
minor works submissions selected for auditing.....	7 033	5 124 α	5 100
<i>Signboard Control System</i>			
unauthorised signboards removal orders issued.....	1 119	1 150	900
unauthorised signboards removed/validated.....	2 255 Δ	2 113	2 000
dangerous/abandoned signboards removed/repaired.....	1 750	1 862	2 000Φ
reports of unauthorised, dangerous or abandoned signboards from members of the public attended to.....	1 929	2 289 $@$	1 800
<i>Building Safety Loan Scheme</i>			
loan applications processed.....	588	657 ϕ	600ϕ
loan applications approved.....	367	486 ϕ	420ϕ
total amount of loans committed (\$m).....	34.0	53.0 ϕ	44.3ϕ
<i>New Buildings</i>			
new building proposals approved.....	232	203	210
plans processed.....	16 884	16 692	17 000
gross floor area of proposed new buildings approved (in 1 000 m ²).....	3 372 Θ	3 671	3 500
site inspections made.....	12 680	12 910	12 500
sites inspected.....	1 368	1 290	1 300
occupation permits issued.....	226	224	220

Ω The higher number was due to more emergency reports received in 2023.

ϕ The lower number was due to fewer non-emergency reports received in 2023.

\parallel The lower number in 2023 was due to the completion of order serving stage in 2022 for the enhanced enforcement action against unauthorised/defective drainage systems arising from the Special Inspection Scheme and higher number of defective drainage systems repaired/rectified in 2022.

ω The higher number in 2023 was due to enhanced enforcement action against unauthorised drainage works arising from the Special Inspection Scheme.

\S The lower number in 2022 was due to slower progress of works arranged by building owners arising from the fifth wave of COVID-19 epidemic.

Φ The higher number in 2023 and the higher estimated number in 2024 are due to more public reports received in 2023 and expected to receive in 2024 respectively.

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.

ψ The higher estimated number in 2024 is due to stepped-up enforcement action against dilapidated buildings.

\wedge Revised description of previous indicator “notices issued” as from 2024.

ρ The lower number in 2023 and the lower estimated number in 2024 are due to the decrease in the number of projections on the exteriors of the selected target buildings.

ϑ The higher number in 2023 was due to enhanced measures on the enforcement of the MBIS notices.

η New indicator as from 2024 to step up prosecutions against long outstanding non-compliant MBIS/MWIS notices.

\square The lower number in 2023 was due to the decrease in the number of units in the target buildings.

τ The higher estimated number in 2024 is due to the increase in the number of units in the target buildings.

ε The higher number in 2022 was due to stepped-up enforcement action.

δ The higher number in 2023 was due to enhanced enforcement action to clear backlog cases.

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

$@$ The higher number was due to more public reports received in 2023.

β The higher number in 2023 and the higher estimated number in 2024 are due to the increase in the number of retaining walls/slopes that requires issue of repair orders.

Λ The higher number in 2023 and the higher estimated number in 2024 are due to streamlining of work procedures and stepped-up enforcement action.

γ The higher number in 2023 was due to streamlining of work procedures and stepped up enforcement action.

\ddagger Revised description of previous indicators “composite buildings - FSDns issued” and “composite buildings - FSDns discharged” as from 2024. In accordance with the FS(B)O, a phased approach is adopted in implementing the fire safety improvement programme. Inspection of target domestic buildings will commence in 2024 after the completion of inspection of all target composite buildings.

λ The higher number in 2023 was due to the increase in the number of units in the target buildings for serving FSDns and issuance of superseding FSDns as a result of ownership change identified in the course of stepped-up enforcement action.

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- ◇ The lower estimated number in 2024 is due to the decrease in the number of units in the target buildings for serving FSDns.
- Ψ The higher number in 2023 was due to the increase in the number of units in the target buildings for serving FSDns.
- α Starting from 2023, the number of minor works submissions selected for auditing has been 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 was increased, while that for document audit checks was reduced.
- Δ The higher number in 2022 was due to clearance of outstanding orders.
- θ Priorities will be given to remove/repair dangerous/abandoned signboards.
- φ The higher number/amount in 2023 and the higher estimated number/amount in 2024 are mainly due to the launch of the third round of OBB 2.0 in 2023.
- ⊖ The lower number in 2022 in GFA of proposed new buildings approved was due to the smaller scale of building proposals processed and approved.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

- 8 During 2024–25, 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 as well as unauthorised basements 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;
 - 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, as well as sustaining tripartite efforts with the HAD and the URA to collaboratively assist owners of old and dilapidated buildings to comply with the requirements of 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;
 - work with the Development Bureau to review the BO, with a view to putting forward legislative proposals to streamline the prosecution procedures, lower the prosecution threshold and increase the penalties as a deterrent against violations of the BO (including erection of UBWs), to enhance compliance with statutory notices/orders, as well as to strengthen the registration and disciplinary systems of contractors in order to enhance the quality and safety of building works;
 - review practices under the MBIS and put forward proposals to adopt a more precise approach in selecting target buildings for issuance of the MBIS notices, proactively identify higher-risk buildings, and enhance the capabilities of the Department to inspect such buildings and carry out emergency repair works through outsourcing;
 - 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 to formulate a new Code of Practice for Seismic-resistant Building Design Standards for the introduction of statutory seismic design requirements for new buildings;
 - continue the development of the ESH final Stage 3 for accepting electronic submissions under the BO;

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- commence a consultancy study to review the overall strategy on adoption of BIM for statutory plan submissions; and
- commence a consultancy study to review the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 (2021 Edition) and relevant legislation so as to ensure the accessibility standards for private buildings are kept abreast with the latest needs and international trends embracing the universal design concepts, while being feasible and pragmatic for implementation in the local context. The first batch of recommendations will focus on elderly-friendly building designs, for announcement in 2024.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

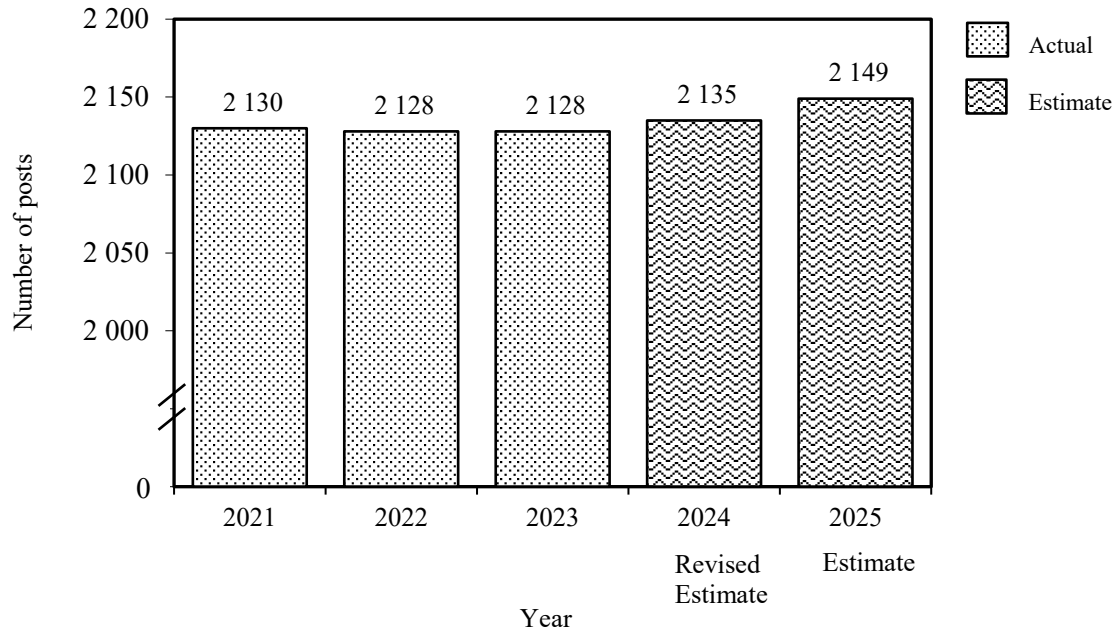
	2022-23 (Actual) (\$m)	2023-24 (Original) (\$m)	2023-24 (Revised) (\$m)	2024-25 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
Buildings and Building Works.....	1,877.8	1,949.7	2,005.5 (+2.9%)	2,110.1 (+5.2%)
				(or +8.2% on 2023-24 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2024-25 is \$104.6 million (5.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. This is mainly due to the increased requirement for salaries and personnel related expenses, a net increase of 14 posts and increased expenses on general departmental expenses.

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*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	1,836,232	1,907,543	1,964,117	2,074,208
227	Payment for Land Registry/Companies Registry Trading Fund services	41,606	42,133	41,353	35,924
	Total, Recurrent	<u>1,877,838</u>	<u>1,949,676</u>	<u>2,005,470</u>	<u>2,110,132</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>1,877,838</u>	<u>1,949,676</u>	<u>2,005,470</u>	<u>2,110,132</u>
<hr/>					
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,877,838</u></u>	<u><u>1,949,676</u></u>	<u><u>2,005,470</u></u>	<u><u>2,110,132</u></u>

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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 Buildings Department is \$2,110,132,000. This represents an increase of \$104,662,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$232,294,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$2,074,208,000 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 2024 will be 2 135 posts including one supernumerary post. It is expected that there will be a net increase of 14 posts 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 \$1,287,184,000.

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.....	1,434,867	1,486,036	1,539,085	1,602,380
- Allowances.....	14,739	12,253	9,224	8,561
- Job-related allowances.....	276	374	148	109
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	3,929	3,890	4,053	3,673
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	149,555	169,264	168,931	191,903
Departmental Expenses				
- Hire of services and professional fees	94,938	106,836	97,429	105,389
- Contract maintenance	2,409	2,802	2,785	2,670
- General departmental expenses	135,519	126,088	142,462	159,523
	1,836,232	1,907,543	1,964,117	2,074,208

5 Provision of \$35,924,000 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. The decrease of \$5,429,000 (13.1%) against the revised estimate for 2023–24 is mainly due to the decreased requirement for ownership checks and registration in Land Registry arising from completion of one-off special scheme to inspect external drainage systems.