

Head 62 — HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Housing) will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2007–08 \$116.7m

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes#

Programme (1) Building Control
Programme (2) Private Housing
Programme (3) Appeal Panel (Housing)
Programme (4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance
Programme (5) Support Services

These programmes contribute to Policy Area 31: Housing (Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands).

Following the transfer of squatter clearance and control duties for the whole territory to the Lands Department effective from 1 April 2006, the programmes have been re-organised with effect from 2006–07. Programmes (1), (2) and (3) are new programmes while Programme (4) is a revised programme as from 2006–07. Programme (5) is a new programme as from 2007–08.

Detail

Programme (1): Building Control

	2005–06 (Actual)	2006–07 (Original)	2006–07 (Revised)	2007–08 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	—	64.2	62.9 (–2.0%)	64.3 (+2.2%) (or +0.2% on 2006–07 Original)

Aim

2 The Housing Department (HD) is delegated with the authority over building control of the Housing Authority (HA)'s buildings that have been sold or otherwise disposed of under sections 4(2)(a) or 17A of the Housing Ordinance. The aim is for the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Department to exercise building control of these former HA's buildings, in accordance with the Buildings Department (BD)'s current practice on building control of private housing, and to make a bi-annual report to the Director of Buildings.

Brief Description

3 The ICU has been carrying out the building control duties in Home Ownership Scheme (HOS)/Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) buildings under delegated authority. The delegation was extended to retail and carparking premises and some public rental housing estates as a result of the divestment of the HA's retail and carparking premises in November 2005 from which the Buildings Ordinance is applicable to this extended portfolio of properties. As at 1 December 2006, the portfolio comprises:

- number of HOS courts/flats : 146 / 219 363
- number of TPS estates/flats : 39 / 189 184
- number of public rental housing estates/flats : 104 / 442 610
- total numbers of courts and estates : 289
- number of retail/carparking premises : 110 / 348
- total numbers of domestic flats (HOS, TPS and public rental housing) : 851 157

4 The work involves:

- processing applications for alteration and addition works within the statutory period;
- attending to emergencies and carrying out enforcement action on:
 - unauthorised building works;
 - dangerous buildings;

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- defective drainage; and
 - dangerous hillsides;
 - conducting the Planned Survey for overall improvements to HOS and TPS buildings; and
 - processing licensing/registration referrals by government departments (e.g. restaurants, places of public entertainment and tutorial schools).
- 5 The key performance measures in respect of building control are:

Targets

	Target	2005 ^Ω (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Plan)
processing plans for alteration and addition works within 60 days (%).....	100	—	100	100
processing resubmissions for alteration and addition works within 30 days (%)..	100	—	100	100
processing applications for consent to commence alteration and addition works within 28 days (%).....	100	—	100	100
advising on restaurant license applications under the Application Vetting Panel system within 12 working days (%)§.....	100	—	80	90
responding to emergencies during office hours (%):φ				
within 1.5 hours for cases in urban areas	100	—	100	100
within two hours for cases in new towns in New Territories (N.T.)....	100	—	100	100
within three hours for cases in other areas in N.T.	100	—	— [∇]	100
responding to emergencies outside office hours (%):φ				
within two hours for cases in urban areas and new towns in N.T.	100	—	—	80^β
within three hours for cases in other areas in N.T.	100	—	—	80^β
providing non-emergency services for reports on unauthorised building works within 48 hours (%).....	100	—	98	99

^Ω Related statistics are not available.

[§] The pledged target has been revised from 14 to 12 working days with effect from 1 July 2006 upon implementation of five-day week.

^φ New targets as from 2006 to categorise the response time to emergencies according to the locations of occurrence.

[∇] No such emergency cases in 2006.

^β The HD will take over the task from the BD with effect from mid 2007 and it is expected that the performance of the Department will pick up gradually. The related statistics for 2006 are shown in the Controlling Officer's Report on the BD.

Indicators

	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
alteration and addition plans received and processed within 60 days.....	16	350	400
resubmitted alteration and addition plans received and processed within 30 days	9	150	250
consents to commence alteration and additional works issued	16	350	350
buildings to be targeted for clearance of unauthorised building works under the ICU's Planned Survey	55	25	30

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	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
unauthorised buildings works			
reports from members of the public attended to	724	170	170
reports on cantilever canopies	63	25	30
advisory letters issued	281	1 445@	1 500@
removal orders issued	437	238	240
prosecutions against failure to comply with removal orders	13	11	10
dilapidated buildings			
reports from members of the public attended to	79	127	130
repairs orders issued	2	3	3
advice on licensing/registration applications (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools, etc.)	492	500	600

@ The increase in the number of advisory letters issued/to be issued in 2006 and 2007 respectively is mainly due to the conduct of the Planned Survey of HOS/TPS buildings.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2007–08

6 During 2007–08, the ICU will:

- continue with the programme of the Planned Survey in HOS/TPS buildings;
- liaise with other government departments to ensure necessary Multi-Disciplinary Response Team measures are in readiness for any outbreak of communicable diseases in Hong Kong; and
- continue to compile as-built records of existing HOS/TPS and public rental housing buildings, and retail and carparking premises, in line with the BD's existing practice and format for private housing, to facilitate future building control.

Programme (2): Private Housing

	2005–06 (Actual)	2006–07 (Original)	2006–07 (Revised)	2007–08 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	—	10.0	11.0 (+10.0%)	14.9 (+35.5%)
				(or +49.0% on 2006–07 Original)

Aim

7 The aim is to maintain an orderly, fair and free environment to facilitate the stable and healthy development of the private residential property market.

Brief Description

8 The work involves:

- collecting data, compiling and maintaining a database on private housing supply;
- releasing data on housing supply in the primary market on a regular basis to enhance market transparency;
- providing analysis on developments in the private housing market;
- monitoring the regime of self-regulation undertaken by the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (REDA) to increase the transparency of sale of uncompleted residential units;
- monitoring developments in the private residential rental market after abolition of security of tenure from 9 July 2004;
- liaising with the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) on the sale of its surplus subsidised sale flats and monitoring the subsidised housing schemes entrusted to the HKHS;
- working with the Estate Agents Authority (EAA) to further improve the calibre and professionalism of local estate agents; and
- administering the appeal mechanism provided for under the Estate Agents Ordinance.

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Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2007–08

9 During 2007–08, the Department will continue to:

- release statistics on private housing supply in the primary market on a quarterly basis;
- closely monitor, in association with the REDA, Consumer Council and the EAA, the adequacy and transparency of sales information provided by developers to purchasers of uncompleted residential units;
- liaise with the EAA to enhance the training for estate agents; and
- liaise with the HKHS on the orderly sale of its surplus subsidised sale flats.

Programme (3): Appeal Panel (Housing)

	2005–06 (Actual)	2006–07 (Original)	2006–07 (Revised)	2007–08 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	—	5.1	4.5 (–11.8%)	9.6 (+113.3%)
				(or +88.2% on 2006–07 Original)

Aim

10 The aim is to provide administrative and secretarial support to the Appeal Panel (Housing) to ensure that appeals lodged under the Housing Ordinance against the termination of leases by the HA are handled in a thorough, impartial and efficient manner.

Brief Description

11 The Appeal Panel (Housing) Secretariat is set up to assist the Appeal Panel (Housing) in discharging its functions. The work involves:

- verifying appellants' status;
- assisting the Chairman of the Panel to appoint the Appeal Tribunals and draw up the hearing schedules;
- issuing notice of hearing together with relevant documents to the appellant and the HA;
- serving as secretary to the Appeal Tribunals;
- issuing notice of decision to the appellant and the HA on the Appeal Tribunal's determination after each hearing;
- handling enquiries and correspondences from appellants and the HA;
- advising Members of the Panel on the scope of authority of the Appeal Panel (Housing) and keeping Members updated on the latest policies on tenancy issues; and
- organising briefing sessions for new Members of the Panel.

12 The key performance measures in respect of Appeal Panel (Housing) are:

Targets

	Target	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Plan)
issuing notice of hearing and relevant documents to appellant and the HA not less than 14 days before the fixed hearing date (%)	100	100	100	100
issuing Appeal Tribunal's determination to appellant and the HA within 14 days after hearing (%)	100	100	100	100

Indicators

	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
no. of appeals received	3 050	4 859	4 100
no. of hearing sessions ^Ψ	167	225	435

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	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
no. of hearings arranged	915	1 382	2 610
no. of appeals heard.....	794	1 256	2 350

Ψ Revised indicator by replacing the term “hearing days” by “hearing sessions” to better reflect the actual arrangement of appeal hearings as there have been concurrent sessions on the same day since 2006.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2007–08

13 During 2007–08, the Appeal Panel (Housing) Secretariat will:

- enhance resources to cope with the increase in caseload, including strengthening staffing support and increasing the number of Members of the Appeal Panel (Housing) to enable the increase in hearing sessions conducted;
- continue to provide efficient and effective support services to the Appeal Panel (Housing) in discharging its duties; and
- ensure that Members are kept up-to-date on the latest policies on tenancy issues to facilitate their consideration of appeals.

Programme (4): Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance

	2005–06¶ (Actual)	2006–07 (Original)	2006–07 (Revised)	2007–08 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	303.0	9.5	14.1 (+48.4%)	16.7 (+18.4%)
				(or +75.8% on 2006–07 Original)

¶ The figure includes the provision for the previous Programme “Squatter Clearance and Squatter Control” which covers squatter clearance and control duties that have been taken up by the Lands Department (LandsD) effective from 1 April 2006.

Aim

14 The aim is to provide rehousing assistance to eligible clearerees affected by government actions in land clearance for development or other purposes, and to victims of natural disasters and other emergency incidents.

Brief Description

15 The work involves:

- verifying rehousing eligibility of the affected occupants;
- screening rehousing applications referred by the LandsD according to prevailing policies and criteria;
- providing assistance in rehousing the occupants of illegal rooftop structures displaced by the BD’s enforcement actions;
- allocating public rental housing and interim housing to eligible applicants;
- paying singleton and doubleton allowances/issue of Green Form Certificates in lieu of rehousing to eligible applicants;
- maintaining computerised records on miscellaneous housing benefits granted by the LandsD and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA);
- providing temporary shelter to victims affected by natural disasters, emergency incidents and other government actions; and
- co-ordinating the use of the transit centres under the purview of the HD.

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16 The key performance measures in respect of rehousing of occupants upon clearance are:

Target

	Target	2005 ^Ω (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Plan)
verification of domestic clearances' rehousing eligibility after clearance announcement not more than eight weeks (%).....	100	—	100	100

^Ω Related statistic is not available.

Indicators

	2005 ^Ω (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
programmed squatter clearances or emergency clearances ^β			
no. of applications processed.....	—	100	900
no. of offers made for public rental housing.....	—	200	1 200
no. of offers made for interim housing	—	100	450
no. of households received other housing benefits	—	10	50
illegal rooftop structure clearances ^β			
no. of applications processed.....	—	700	700
no. of offers made for public rental housing.....	—	200	200
no. of offers made for interim housing	—	100	100
no. of households received other housing benefits	—	10	50
emergency			
no. of bedspaces in transit centres provided ^Δ	—	700	408

^Ω Related statistics are not available.

^β The indicators mainly depend on the progress of the clearance projects, government actions and BD's programmed enforcement actions against illegal rooftop structures.

^Δ Upon closure of Wong Chuk Hang Transit Centre in September 2006, only 408 bedspaces in Po Tin Transit Centre are provided.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2007–08

17 During 2007–08, the Department will continue to:

- undertake rehousing for affected occupants referred by the LandsD and the BD including vetting rehousing eligibility;
- maintain computerised records on miscellaneous housing benefits granted by the LandsD and the URA;
- provide temporary shelter to victims affected by natural disasters, emergency incidents and other government actions; and
- co-ordinate the use of the transit centres under the purview of the HD.

Programme (5): Support Services

	2005–06 (Actual)	2006–07 (Original)	2006–07 (Revised)	2007–08 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	—	—	—	11.2

Aim

18 The aim is to provide efficient and effective support services for housing-related matters and infrastructure projects.

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Brief Description

19 The work involves:

- administering housing-related infrastructure projects under the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRP) Head 711 by providing intra-Governmental services for implementation of these projects. The work involves liaison with concerned departments at various stages from project inception, feasibility study, funding approval, detailed design and construction as well as monitoring of the delivery of projects according to schedule and within budget;
- co-ordinating and checking data accuracy of overall public and private housing statistics and providing necessary data and analysis to relevant bureaux and departments for infrastructure and land supply planning; and
- ensuring adequate supply of and timely delivery of suitable sites for development of public housing to meet the policy pledge.

20 The key performance measures in respect of support services are:

Indicators

	2005 (Actual)	2006 (Actual)	2007 (Estimate)
no. of infrastructure projects obtaining funding approval from the Legislative Council in the year	1	1	5
no. of infrastructure projects under construction	46	44	38

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2007–08

21 During 2007–08, the Department will continue to:

- liaise closely with concerned bureaux/departments to facilitate the implementation of housing-related infrastructure projects to meet the public housing production programme;
- monitor the progress on supply and timely availability of public housing sites; and
- assess the feasibility of returning prime public housing sites to the Government.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2005-06 (Actual) (\$m)	2006-07 (Original) (\$m)	2006-07 (Revised) (\$m)	2007-08 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Building Control	—	64.2	62.9	64.3
(2) Private Housing	—	10.0	11.0	14.9
(3) Appeal Panel (Housing).....	—	5.1	4.5	9.6
(4) Rehousing of Occupants upon Clearance	303.0	9.5	14.1	16.7
(5) Support Services	—	—	—	11.2
	303.0	88.8	92.5 (+4.2%)	116.7 (+26.2%)
				(or +31.4% on 2006-07 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2007-08 is \$1.4 million (2.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2006-07. This is mainly due to increase in operating expenses.

Programme (2)

Provision for 2007-08 is \$3.9 million (35.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2006-07. This is mainly due to the provision for the HD's existing work on compilation and analysis of data relating to the private housing market including salaries and on-cost of the staff efforts involved (equivalent to four staff) which will be funded from General Revenue with effect from 2007-08.

Programme (3)

Provision for 2007-08 is \$5.1 million (113.3%) higher than the revised estimate for 2006-07. This is mainly due to increase in operating expenses including salaries and on-cost for an addition of eight staff for handling appeals.

Programme (4)

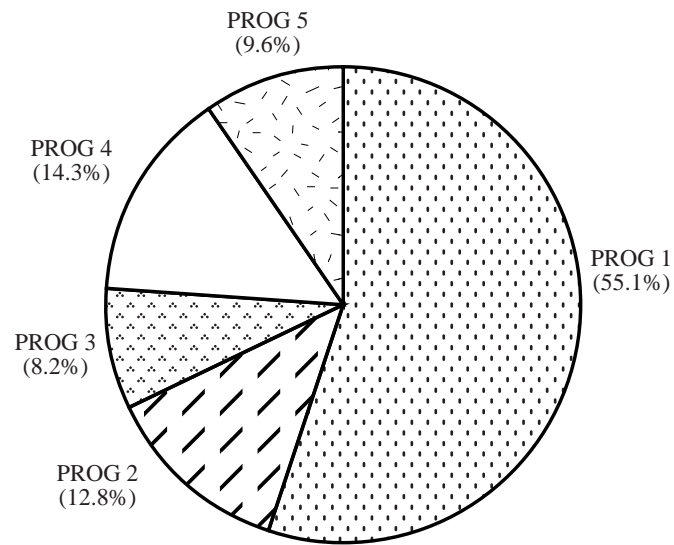
Provision for 2007-08 is \$2.6 million (18.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2006-07. This is mainly due to increase in operating expenses including salaries and on-cost for an addition of six staff to cope with the increase in workload relating to rehousing of the occupants of illegal rooftop structures displaced by the BD's enforcement action.

Programme (5)

Provision for 2007-08 is \$11.2 million. This is the provision for the HD's existing support services including salaries and on-cost of the staff efforts involved (equivalent to ten staff) which will be funded from General Revenue with effect from 2007-08.

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*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2007-08)*



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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2005-06	Approved estimate 2006-07	Revised estimate 2006-07	Estimate 2007-08
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses.....	302,952	88,827	92,527	116,736
003	Recoverable salaries and allowances (General).....	2,818,970			
	<i>Deduct</i> reimbursements.....	<i>Cr. 2,818,970</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
	Total, Recurrent	<u>302,952</u>	<u>88,827</u>	<u>92,527</u>	<u>116,736</u>
	Total, Operating Account.....	<u>302,952</u>	<u>88,827</u>	<u>92,527</u>	<u>116,736</u>
	Total Expenditure.....	<u><u>302,952</u></u>	<u><u>88,827</u></u>	<u><u>92,527</u></u>	<u><u>116,736</u></u>

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2007–08 for the expenses of those activities of the Housing Department (HD) that are funded from General Revenue is \$116,736,000. This represents an increase of \$24,209,000 over the revised estimate for 2006–07 and a decrease of \$186,216,000 against actual expenditure in 2005–06.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$116,736,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses incurred by the HD under the programmes of building control, private housing, Appeal Panel (Housing), rehousing of occupants upon clearance and support services. The increase of \$24,209,000 (26.2%) over the revised estimate for 2006–07 is mainly due to the increase in staffing under the programmes of Appeal Panel (Housing) and rehousing of occupants upon clearance, and the funding of the HD's existing work on compilation and analysis of data relating to the private housing market as well as provision of support services from General Revenue effective from 1 April 2007.

3 Gross provision of \$2,818,970,000 under *Subhead 003 Recoverable salaries and allowances (General)* is for salaries and allowances for civil servants working in the Housing Authority (HA) including those working under the programmes of building control, private housing, Appeal Panel (Housing), rehousing of occupants upon clearance, and support services. Expenditure under this subhead is reimbursed by the HA.