

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

ETWB(W)043

Head : 60 Highways Department Subhead:

Question Serial No.

0957

Programme : (4) Technical Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Highways

Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Question :

The provision for the vegetation maintenance for roadside slopes and high speed roads for 2006 is \$30 million, which is 250% more than the actual expenditure of \$8 million for 2005. On this,

- (a) please specify the reasons for the substantial increase in provision; and
- (b) will the work be outsourced? If yes, please specify the numbers of outsourced contracts and workers involved, as well as the minimum pay required. If no, will the department deploy in-house staff or employ additional staff to take up the work? Please specify the manpower arrangement involved.

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

- (a) The Highways Department has to earmark extra resources to maintain the vegetation on roadside slopes and along high speed roads to achieve a safe, green, tidy and hygienic environment. The Department is in the process of taking up this new responsibility which will cover around 9 300 roadside slopes (including roadside slopes at the Penny's Bay Development Area) and all expressways in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
- (b) Vegetation maintenance works are outsourced together with road maintenance works through term contracts. There are currently seven term contracts covering vegetation maintenance. In 2006-07, there will be three additional contracts awarded to expand the coverage of the vegetated areas. In these contracts, the contractors are required to complete vegetation maintenance according to the contract requirements and the Department will carry out periodic audits to ensure that the contract requirements are fulfilled. Unlike services contracts, works contracts do not specify the number of workers for the works nor the minimum wages of labourers.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MAK CHAI KWONG

Post Title Director of Highways

Date 13 March 2006