

Head 82 — BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

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

Estimate 2025–26 **\$2,104.4m**

Establishment ceiling 2025–26 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 117 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 reducing by 38 posts to 2 079 posts as at 31 March 2026..... **\$1,306.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 32 directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 and as at 31 March 2026.

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

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	2,003.7	2,110.1	2,124.0 (+0.7%)	2,104.4 (–0.9%)
				(or –0.3% on 2024–25 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 2024, 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 of 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 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 target 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 Drainage Inspection Scheme) to protect public health and safety;

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- regularised the special scheme to inspect external walls of higher risk buildings (Special External Wall Inspection Scheme) and carried out or caused the building owners to carry out emergency works to remove obvious danger arising from loose rendering or concrete to safeguard public safety;
- 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;
- commenced the consultancy study to further develop 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;
- reviewed the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) policy and adopted a more precise approach in selecting target buildings for issuing MBIS notices;
- in collaboration with the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), continued to implement Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0), and sustained 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 MBIS to protect public safety;
- in collaboration with the Security Bureau (SB), the Fire Services Department (FSD), URA and HAD via the collaborative platform set up by the Development Bureau (DEVB), continued to assist owners to comply with fire safety directions and step up enforcement actions;
- in collaboration with 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; and
- worked with DEVB to review the BO and commenced public consultation on a package of proposals to expedite building inspection and repair, rationalise the policy for handling UBWs, and to enhance building works safety.

New Buildings

- launched Stage 3 of the Electronic Submission Hub (ESH) for accepting electronic submissions under the BO;
 - launched the Building Information Modelling (BIM) plug-in tool to facilitate automated checking of area calculations in general building plan submissions and continued to develop other BIM plug-in tools for checking fire safety requirements, sanitary fitments provisions, building separation requirements and structural plan compatibility;
 - 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, practice notes and codes of practice with a view to modernising building design and construction standards and streamlining the development process;
 - 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
 - commenced the consultancy study to review the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 (2024 Edition) and relevant legislation and formulated the first batch of recommendations on elderly-friendly building designs for consultation with stakeholders.
- 7 The key performance measures in respect of buildings and building works are:

Targets

	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>				
responding to emergencies during office hours (%)				
within 1.5 hours for cases in urban areas	100	99.8	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

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	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
responding to emergencies outside office hours (%)				
within two hours for cases in urban areas and new towns in N.T.	100	100	99.6	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	99.4	100	99.0
<i>Existing Buildings</i>				
buildings targeted for inspection and repair as default works under OBB 2.0	300	333 Δ	300	300
buildings targeted for prescribed inspection and, if necessary, prescribed repair under MBIS \diamond	600	600	600	600
buildings targeted for prescribed window inspection and, if necessary, prescribed window repair under Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) \diamond	600	600	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	6 500 μ	4 221	6 522 \wedge	6 500\wedge
buildings targeted for drainage investigation and repair as default works under DRS \S	350	384	352	— \S
buildings targeted for removal of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards, lanes and basements Ω	80	95	90	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 \ddagger	400	402	400	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	99.0	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	100	100	100
<i>New Buildings</i>				
processing building plans				
within 60 days for new submissions (%)	90.0	97.7	98.1	90.0
within 30 days for re-submissions (%).....	90.0	98.7	99.1	90.0

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	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
processing within 28 days applications for consent to commence building works (%).....	90.0	98.7	99.3	90.0
approving general building plan submissions of high-yield residential projects on the first or second submission (%)γ.....	80	100	100	80
processing within 14 days applications for occupation permits (%).....	100	100	100	100

Δ The higher number in 2023 was due to operation 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.

μ The target is revised from 4 000 to 6 500 as from 2025 having regard to the enhanced use of drones and streamlined workflow in carrying out of the V-by-V surveys.

∧ The higher actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to enhanced use of drones and streamlined workflow in carrying out the V-by-V surveys.

§ Target to be removed as from 2025. DRS completed its target to benefit owners of over 3 000 buildings in 2024.

Ω Revised description of the previous target “buildings targeted for removal of UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes” as from 2024.

‡ Revised description of the previous target “composite buildings inspected for improvement of fire safety measures” as from 2024 to include domestic buildings as inspection targets. Inspection of target domestic buildings commenced in March 2024 after the completion of inspection of all target composite buildings.

γ For residential projects with 500 units or more and not involving major planning, land or fire safety issues.

Indicators

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
<i>24-hour emergency services</i>			
emergency reports attended to.....	983	840Ω	800Ω
<i>Non-emergency services for reports on UBWs under construction</i>			
reports attended to	1 193	1 007φ	1 100
<i>Existing Buildings</i>			
<i>UBWs</i>			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	29 914	30 412	30 000
removal orders issued.....	9 109	8 074¶	7 000¶
prosecutions against failure to comply with removal orders.....	4 395ω	3 770	3 600
unauthorised structures removed and irregularities rectified	29 585	28 504	27 000
<i>dilapidated/dangerous buildings</i>			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	17 626	18 018	17 000
repair/investigation orders issued.....	848	882	800
buildings repaired/rectified/obvious danger removedΨ.....	2 501	3 042Φ	2 700
non-compliant repair/investigation orders for default works.....	83	133ψ	140ψ
<i>mandatory building inspection</i>			
notices issued to owners of target buildingsα.....	8 374	4 907ρ	5 000ρ
notices discharged	14 070	9 095σ	10 000σ
prosecutions against failure to comply with noticesη....	—	2 582	2 700∧
<i>mandatory window inspection</i>			
notices issued to owners of target buildingsα.....	32 588	40 530τ	40 000τ
notices discharged	41 777	41 245	42 000
prosecutions against failure to comply with noticesη....	—	311	300
<i>NTEHs</i>			
removal orders issued for UBWs in NTEHs.....	1 633δ	1 291	1 300
<i>sub-divided flats</i>			
sub-divided flats inspected	1 719	1 630	1 650
sub-divided flats rectified of irregularities	323	329	320

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	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
dangerous retaining walls/slopes			
reports from members of the public attended to.....	543@	471@	280
repair orders issued.....	45β	51β	40
dangerous retaining walls/slopes repaired.....	95	101	95
prescribed commercial premises			
fire safety directions (FSDns) issued.....	133	197υ	130
FSDns discharged.....	160	216Δ	220Λ
specified commercial buildings			
fire safety improvement directions (FSIDns) issued.....	342	401ε	400ε
FSIDns discharged.....	622	733Λ	720Λ
composite/domestic buildings‡			
FSDns issued.....	4 477λ	2 893◇	3 000◇
FSDns discharged.....	3 377	4 998Λ	4 500Λ
industrial buildings			
FSDns issued.....	2 067	1 506◇	1 200◇
FSDns discharged.....	288	407Λ	450Λ
licence/registration applications processed (restaurants, places of public entertainment, tutorial schools etc.).....	12 879	13 217	12 500
<i>Minor Works Control System</i>			
minor works submissions received.....	146 831	152 731	150 000
minor works submissions selected for auditing.....	5 124	5 116	5 100
<i>Signboard Control System</i>			
unauthorised signboards removal orders issued.....	1 150	936	750#
unauthorised signboards removed/validated.....	2 113	2 154	1 800#
dangerous/abandoned signboards removed/repaired.....	1 862	1 928	1 900
reports of unauthorised, dangerous or abandoned signboards from members of the public attended to.....	2 289	2 743□	2 200
<i>Building Safety Loan Scheme</i>			
loan applications processed.....	657	577φ	500φ
loan applications approved.....	486	453φ	340φ
total amount of loans committed (\$m).....	53.0	51.9φ	38.6φ
<i>New Buildings</i>			
new building proposals approved.....	203	167Δ	170
plans processed.....	16 692	15 598Δ	16 000
gross floor area of proposed new buildings approved (in 1 000 m ²).....	3 671	2 807Θ	3 000
site inspections made.....	12 910	12 591	12 500
sites inspected.....	1 290	1 327	1 300
occupation permits issued.....	224	216	220

Ω The lower actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to fewer emergency reports received in 2024. The number in 2025 is expected to be similar to that in 2024.

φ The lower number was due to fewer non-emergency reports received in 2024.

¶ The lower actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to decrease/expected decrease in number of UBWs as some target buildings were/will be low-rise buildings.

ω The higher number in 2023 was due to enhanced enforcement action against unauthorised drainage works arising from the Special Drainage Inspection Scheme funded under the Anti-epidemic Fund.

Ψ Revised description of the previous indicator “buildings repaired/rectified” as from 2025 to include removal of obvious danger under the Special External Wall Inspection Scheme.

Φ The higher number in 2024 was due to the proactive identification and removal of obvious danger under the Special External Wall Inspection Scheme.

ψ The higher actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to stepped-up enforcement action against dilapidated buildings.

α Revised description of the previous indicator “notices issued” as from 2024 to specify the recipients of notices issued.

ρ The lower number in 2024 was due to the decrease in the number of projections on the exteriors of the selected target buildings. The number in 2025 is expected to be similar to that in 2024.

ο The lower actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to the decrease in the number of notices issued in recent years, as priority was/is given to tackle difficult cases such as the common parts of the building, the notices of which take a longer period for compliance.

η New indicator as from 2024 to track prosecution efforts against long outstanding non-compliant MBIS/MWIS notices.

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- ^ The higher estimated number in 2025 is due to stepped-up prosecutions against long outstanding non-compliant MBIS notices.
- τ The higher actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to the increase in the number of units in the target buildings.
- δ The higher number in 2023 was due to enhanced enforcement action to clear backlog cases.
- @ The higher numbers were due to more public reports received in 2023 and 2024.
- β The higher numbers in 2023 and 2024 were due to more retaining walls/slopes requiring issue of repair orders.
- υ The higher number in 2024 was due to the issuance of superseding FSDns as a result of ownership change identified in the course of stepped-up enforcement action.
- Λ The higher actual/estimated numbers in 2024/2025 were/are due to streamlining of work procedures and stepped-up enforcement action.
- ε The higher actual/estimated number in 2024/2025 was/is due to the issuance of superseding FSIDns as a result of ownership change identified in the course of stepped-up enforcement action.
- ‡ Revised description of the previous indicators “composite buildings – FSDns issued” and “composite buildings – FSDns discharged” as from 2024 to include domestic buildings as inspection targets. Inspection of target domestic buildings commenced in March 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.
- ◇ The lower actual/estimated numbers in 2024/2025 were/are due to the decrease in the number of units in the target buildings for serving FSDns.
- # The lower estimated numbers in 2025 are due to reduced number of target streets to be identified for LSO on removal of unauthorised signboards.
- The higher number was due to more public reports received in 2024.
- φ The lower actual/estimated numbers/amount in 2024/2025 were/are mainly due to fewer applications received towards the final stage of the DRS.
- Δ The lower numbers in 2024 were due to fewer submissions received.
- ⊖ The lower number in 2024 was due to the smaller scale of building proposals processed and fewer submissions received.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26

- 8** During 2025–26, 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 regularised External Wall Inspection Scheme for higher risk buildings with the use of drones and artificial intelligence provided by outsourced service providers to remove obvious danger arising from loose rendering or concrete to safeguard public safety;
 - continue the 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;
 - in collaboration with URA, continue to implement OBB 2.0, and sustain tripartite efforts with 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 URA, HAD, SB and FSD, continue to assist owners to comply with fire safety directions and step up enforcement actions;
 - continue to prepare legislative amendments to the B(SSFPDW&L)R for transforming the existing prescriptive requirements to performance-based standards, and rationalise and update the relevant statutory provisions;
 - continue to work with DEVB to develop the legislative proposals to expedite building inspection and repair, rationalise the policy for handling UBWs and enhance building works safety;
 - 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, practice notes and codes of practice with a view to modernising building design and construction standards and streamlining the development process;
 - 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;

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- continue the development of the ESH to prepare for mandatory electronic submissions under the BO;
- continue the consultancy study to review the overall strategy on adoption of BIM for statutory plan submissions and prepare legislative amendments for mandating electronic submissions; and
- implement by phase the recommendations on elderly-friendly building designs; and continue the consultancy study to review the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 (2024 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.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

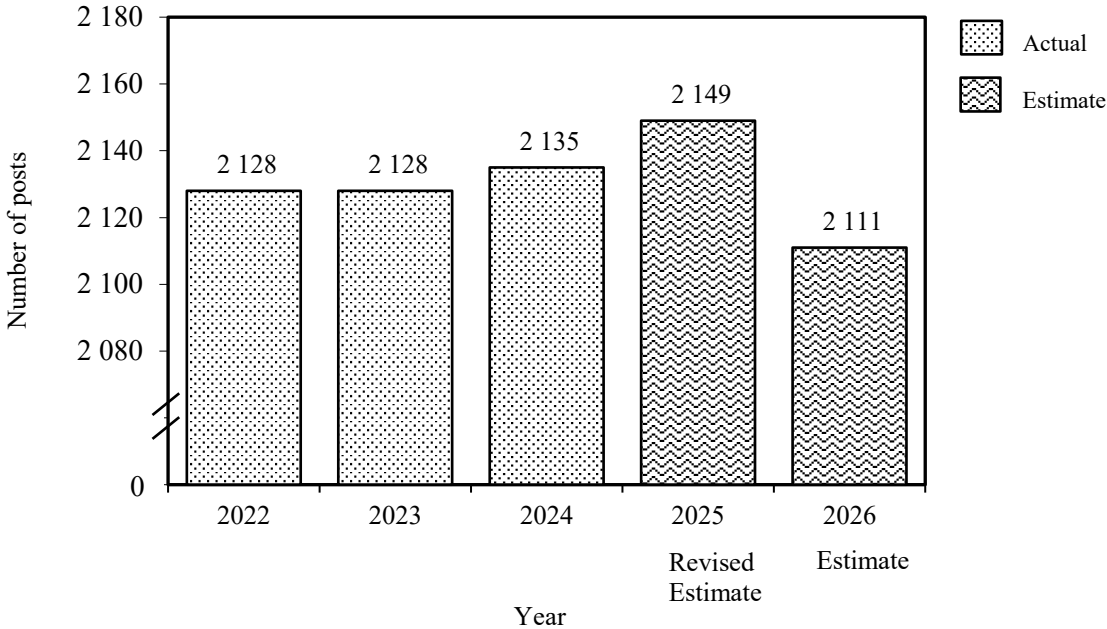
	2023–24 (Actual) (\$m)	2024–25 (Original) (\$m)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$m)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
Buildings and Building Works.....	2,003.7	2,110.1	2,124.0 (+0.7%)	2,104.4 (–0.9%)
				(or –0.3% on 2024–25 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2025–26 is \$19.6 million (0.9%) lower than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to the decreased provisions for consultancy services, contract maintenance and general departmental expenses as well as a net decrease of 38 posts, partly offset by the increased provisions for full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2024–25 and salary increments.

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



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2023–24	Approved estimate 2024–25	Revised estimate 2024–25	Estimate 2025–26	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	1,961,554	2,074,208	2,096,287	2,076,449
227	Payment for Land Registry/Companies Registry Trading Fund services	42,129	35,924	27,701	27,975
	Total, Recurrent	<u>2,003,683</u>	<u>2,110,132</u>	<u>2,123,988</u>	<u>2,104,424</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>2,003,683</u>	<u>2,110,132</u>	<u>2,123,988</u>	<u>2,104,424</u>
<hr/>					
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>2,003,683</u></u>	<u><u>2,110,132</u></u>	<u><u>2,123,988</u></u>	<u><u>2,104,424</u></u>

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2025–26 for the salaries and expenses of the Buildings Department is \$2,104,424,000. This represents a decrease of \$19,564,000 against the revised estimate for 2024–25 and an increase of \$100,741,000 over the actual expenditure in 2023–24.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$2,076,449,000 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 2025 will be 2 149 posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of 38 posts in 2025–26. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2025–26, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$1,306,793,000.

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

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Original) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$'000)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	1,536,901	1,602,380	1,624,926	1,657,961
- Allowances.....	9,505	8,561	11,981	8,913
- Job-related allowances.....	148	109	217	118
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	3,901	3,673	3,436	2,903
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	168,347	191,903	191,669	208,530
Departmental Expenses				
- Hire of services and professional fees	95,160	105,389	97,875	74,446
- Contract maintenance	2,172	2,670	2,904	1,977
- General departmental expenses	145,420	159,523	163,279	121,601
	1,961,554	2,074,208	2,096,287	2,076,449

5 Provision of \$27,975,000 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.