

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)107

Question Serial No.

1334

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The quality of public cleansing services is a matter of major public concern. The total expenditure under Programme (2) in 2012-13 will be increased by 8.4%. It is noted however that there will be a net decrease of 69 posts. The Department indicated (in its reply to the question I raised last year) that the requirement for Workman II (WM II) in the next four years would be considered having regard to the reviews of the deployment of and need for WM II. Yet, the number of WM II has been on the decrease. From 2008 to 2010, the number of WM II reduced by 328 whereas the percentage of outsourced street cleansing services increased from 66.7% to 74.6%. Please advise this Committee on the following:

- (a) the number of WM II posts included in the net decrease of posts in 2012-13;
- (b) the percentage of outsourced street cleansing services in each of the past five years by using the table below as there has been an increasing trend in the percentage; and

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Expenditure on public cleansing services					
Percentage of change (%)					
Total value of outsourced service contracts					
Percentage of change (%)					
Percentage of outsourced cleansing services (%)					
Number of WM II					

- (c) given the number of WM II has been on the decrease, whether a minimum manpower requirement for WM II has been set so that the Government will have sufficient manpower to cope with major public health incidents and crises; if yes, the minimum manpower requirement; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows-

- (a) The 69 posts to be deleted are Workman II (WM II) grade posts. All are vacant posts with no operational need for retention.
- (b) The percentages of outsourced cleansing services are as follows:

		2008-09 (as at 31.3.2009)	2009-10 (as at 31.3.2010)	2010-11 (as at 31.3.2011)	2011-12 (as at 31.12.2011)	2012-13
Expenditure on public cleansing services ^{Note 1}		\$1,693.9 million	\$1,702.9 million	\$1,770.4 million	\$1,840.1 million (estimate)	\$1,945.9 million (estimate)
Percentage of change (%)		+14.1%	+0.5%	+4.0%	+3.9%	+5.7%
Total value of outsourced service contracts ^{Note 1} (public cleansing services)		\$1,560.8 million	\$1,770.3 million	\$1,759.8 million	\$2,011.7 million	Note 2
Percentage of change (%)		+12.6%	+13.4%	-0.6%	+14.3%	
Percentage of outsourced cleansing services (%)	Street cleansing	67%	71%	75%	76%	
	Waste collection	69%	72%	72%	74%	
	Mechanical gully emptying	70%	80%	81%	81%	
	Others ^{Note 3}	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Number of WM II (public cleansing services)		2 346	2 136	2 129	2 110	

Note 1: Expenditure on public cleansing services refers to the money spent on public cleansing services provided by departmental staff and contractors for that year, whereas total value of outsourced service contracts refers to the total value of public cleansing services contracts for the whole contract periods (normally five years for waste collection services contracts, and two years for street cleansing or other services contracts).

Note 2: Figures for 2012-13 are not yet available.

Note 3: Other outsourced public cleansing services include animal carcass collection services, cleansing and waste removal services for special sites / areas, desludging and mid-night conservancy services, mechanical street sweeping services, portable toilet services and recyclable collection services.

- (c) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department considers that currently it is appropriate to maintain about 3 000 WM II to meet departmental operational needs.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Clement LEUNG

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 1.3.2012