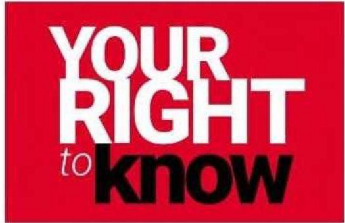


# Worry over drop in development outlay

Stakeholders also concerned that DBKL's management expenditure has soared to RM2bil



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GROWING disparity between development and management allocations in the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) budget is causing concern among stakeholders. They fear the disproportion might affect DBKL's quality of services and the city's preparedness in dealing with climate change.

They want DBKL to explain its reduced development expenditure, which has been declining over the past five years.

The allocation has plummeted from RM1.2bil in 2019 to RM650mil this year, raising concerns that this might affect infrastructure development.

Development expenditure is used for developing and maintaining various infrastructures, including flood-mitigation projects, drainage and new roads.

Noticeably, DBKL's management expenditure has been increasing steadily in the past decade.

From RM1.63bil allocated in 2015, the amount soared to RM2.01bil this year, which is nearly a 25% surge.



Kok Wai: More funds are needed to build and maintain flood mitigation infrastructures.

The management fund covers administrative expenses such as remunerations of workers and fixed payments, among others.

Development expenses and management allocation are two components of DBKL's annual budget.

DBKL's overall budget has seen a downward trajectory since 2019, dropping from RM2.89bil to RM2.6bil this year.

### Concerned stakeholders

Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai expressed concerns at the declining development expenses.

He stressed that more funds were needed to develop and maintain the city's infrastructure to deal with the impact of climate change.



Zahir: A meeting between KL MPs and DBKL will be held to discuss the upcoming budget.

"Kuala Lumpur residents have a right to be worried. The development fund should be increasing, not decreasing," he said.

He called on DBKL and mayor Datuk Seri Kamarulzaman Mat Salleh to disclose details of the budget to Kuala Lumpur MPs for scrutiny.

"Although we were invited to offer input, we were never given details until the budget was presented to the media," he said.

Wangsa Maju MP Zahir Hassan said the MPs had yet to meet with DBKL for a discussion on the 2025 budget.

"No date has been set for it. I would be happy to comment (about the budget) after the meeting," he told *StarMetro*.

Kuala Lumpur Residents Action for Sustainable Develop-



Residents attending the DBKL budget engagement session at Dewan Masyarakat Taman Medan Idaman in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur. — SHAARI CHEMAT/The Star

ment Association (KLRA+SD) chairman Tan Booi Charn proposed that DBKL make public its financial reports from past years to ensure transparency.

"This will allow residents and stakeholders to better understand how the funds are spent, and offer feedback," she said.

Kepong community activist Yee Poh Ping said DBKL should consider merging several departments to cut its management expenses.

"It could also redefine the job scope of its employees for optimal productivity and digitise services for more efficient management of customers," he said.

Yee also suggested that DBKL carry out enforcement operations during business hours, to reduce overtime payment.

The local authority has been stepping up enforcement operations in recent months, including after 5pm, raising concerns of further strain on its finances.

Former DBKL advisory board member and activist Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, however, said it was normal for management expenses to exceed that of development.

Lee, who served on the board for 16 years until 2009, said there was no reduction in the develop-



ment allocation during his time. The shrinking of development expenses in recent years, he said, might reflect a push by DBKL to cut costs amid a challenging economy.

"However, it cannot cut the management expenditure, as it needs to continue paying its staff to sustain operations," Lee added.

A DBKL spokesperson said the concerns had been forwarded to the relevant department.

### Call for feedback

DBKL is currently gathering public input for its 2025 budget, which is slated for review and approval by the year end.

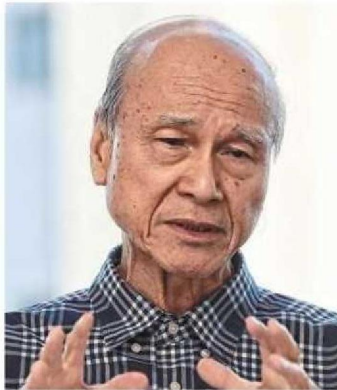
Engagement sessions are being held at the parliamentary level until July 27 for stakeholders to



Booi Charn suggests DBKL make public its financial records to allow for public scrutiny and feedback.



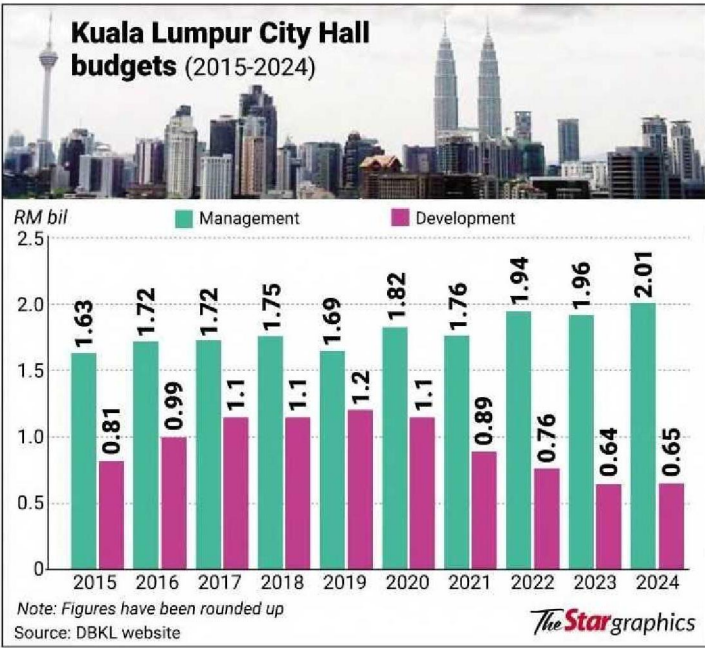
Yee is suggesting a reorganisation of DBKL departments for optimal productivity.



Lee: The drop in development expenditure can reflect a cost-cutting push by DBKL.



Lai: Public feedback gathered will be brought to an internal committee for discussion.



give feedback.

Among issues being looked at are physical and socio-economic developments, urban planning and control, as well as services by the local authority.

DBKL advisory board member Andre Lai said the feedback gathered would be presented to an internal committee for vetting.

"Internal meetings will also be held to discuss the draft budget

before it is presented to the DBKL advisory board for review," he said.

The board, which meets quarterly, comprises experts and activists appointed to advise the mayor on issues including the annual budget.

A DBKL spokesperson said the new budget would be unveiled before year end, after the tabling of the national budget.



DBKL's development budget has seen a downward trend since 2019.