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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-24

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Session No. : 12

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SV- DEVB(PL)001	SV006	TSE Wai-chuen, Tony	138	(2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S018)

Head: (138) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Planning and Lands Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (700) General non-recurrent
(Item 802 Operation Building Bright 2.0)

Programme: (2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
(Ms Doris HO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. According to the reply and figures given by the Government in relation to the number of Category 2 buildings selected by the Buildings Department based on risk assessment since the launch of Operation Building Bright 2.0 to offer subsidies, as of end-2022, a total of 1 311 buildings were selected; however, there were only 248 buildings with prescribed repair works completed, accounting for 19%. For Yau Tsim Mong and Sham Shui Po districts with relatively more such cases, only 40 of the 356 selected buildings have completed repair works in the former, while only 83 of the 325 selected buildings have completed repair works in the latter. Please provide the details of the cases of Category 1 and Category 2 buildings with repair works yet to be completed in these two districts in Kowloon West, including the approval time of the applications and reasons for delay in repair works, broken down by year.
2. With respect to Category 2 buildings, has the Government examined the impact arising from delay in building repair works, in particular the impact on building structural safety? If yes, what are the details?
3. Does the Government have any plan to push for repair works of these buildings so as to step up the pace of implementation?
4. Given that the Government is planning to amend legislation to lower the compulsory sale application thresholds for private residential buildings in a bid to expedite redevelopment of old districts, the compulsory sale application threshold for private buildings aged 50 or above but below 70 will be lowered from 80% to no less than 70% of ownership, while the compulsory sale application threshold for private buildings aged 70 or above will be lowered from 80% to no less than 60% of ownership. Please provide the numbers of buildings aged 30 years, 40 years, 50 years, 60 years, 70 years, 80 years or above, broken down by the 18 districts.

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent

Reply:

Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) is to provide financial and technical support to aged buildings with relatively low rateable value to comply with the requirements of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS). There are two categories of buildings under OBB 2.0. Category 1 buildings are those whose owners are prepared to take up the organisation of inspection and repair works of their buildings under MBIS. Category 2 buildings cover those with outstanding MBIS notices but the owners concerned have difficulties in co-ordinating the requisite inspections and repair works. The Buildings Department (BD) proactively selects Category 2 buildings on a risk basis and exercises its statutory power to carry out the requisite inspection and repair works in default of the owners, and seeks to recover the cost from them afterwards. The replies to specific questions raised are set out below.

1. Urban Renewal Authority and BD do not have readily available details on the cases of Category 1 and Category 2 buildings with repair works yet to be completed in Yau Tsim Mong and Sham Shui Po districts. Generally speaking, the time of completion for repair works depends on various factors, including size of building, requirement and complexity of detailed investigation, scope and scale of repair works, as well as any access problem encountered. For example, the repair works for old buildings may involve rectification of drainage defects and relaying of underground drains which are complicated in nature and necessitate more time to complete. The epidemic had also caused a certain extent of delay to the progress of works for reasons such as workers being infected and hindered work flow due to social distancing measures/work-from-home arrangements.
2. For Category 2 buildings, BD engages outsourced consultants and government contractors to carry out the prescribed inspection and repair works on behalf of owners with co-ordination difficulties. Once the Category 2 buildings have been assigned to the consultant under the contract, the consultant would closely monitor the conditions of the buildings at any stage of work. In case of any imminent danger identified, urgent works would be arranged immediately by the government contractor with the supervision by the consultant to protect public safety.
3. BD has all along been closely monitoring the performance of consultants and government contractors for ensuring timely completion of prescribed inspections and repairs. BD has also set out procedures to expedite the dismantling of scaffolding in order to minimise inconvenience caused to the public. In order to cope with the access problems, BD has been deploying its in-house social service team for the purpose of enhancing communication with owners/occupants so as to facilitate access arrangement and reduce resistance encountered during the course of default works. With the above measures and the subsiding epidemic situation, we believe repair works will pick up its pace soon, and we will continue to explore ways to facilitate the implementation of the repair works.
4. The geographical distribution of private residential and composite buildings of different age groups from 30 years onwards as of end-2022 is set out below –

	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or above	Total
Central & Western	457	559	672	226	103	2 017
Eastern	374	310	199	150	28	1 061
Kowloon City	434	515	527	580	206	2 262
Kwai Tsing	86	118	23	0	4	231
Kwun Tong	110	138	181	8	0	437
North	190	134	165	25	42	556
Islands	378	362	28	2	0	770
Sai Kung	913	691	115	0	0	1 719
Sham Shui Po	272	368	518	318	71	1 547
Shatin	639	142	46	4	0	831
Southern	852	639	220	97	110	1 918
Tai Po	1 051	548	66	2	8	1 675
Tsuen Wan	174	109	187	42	5	517
Tuen Mun	312	264	8	2	0	586
Wan Chai	259	432	684	315	100	1 790
Wong Tai Sin	39	54	166	8	2	269
Yau Tsim Mong	149	385	916	527	114	2 091
Yuen Long	1 428	534	63	0	57	2 082
Total	8 117	6 302	4 784	2 306	850	22 359

We do not compile separate records for buildings aged over 80.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)002

(Question Serial No. S019)

Head: (138) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Planning and Lands Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
(Ms Doris HO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. Under the auspices of the Government, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is taking forward the redevelopment of old districts, including putting forward the District Study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok and the district planning studies for Sham Shui Po and Tsuen Wan. Given a huge sum of expenditure will be involved in the redevelopment of the two districts, according to the Government's reply, the URA has been invited to put forward proposal for raising the borrowing limit of the URA in order to solve the financing problems. Will the Government inform this Committee whether a reasonable timeframe has been drawn up for the studies and implementation of redevelopment projects in respect of the three old districts? If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
2. With regard to financing, has the Government considered any alternative new approach with a view to expediting the redevelopment of these three old districts? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent

Reply:

1. The Master Urban Renewal Concept Plans recommended by the District Study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok (YMDS) completed by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) in September 2021 are planning visions guiding the making of amendments to the relevant Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) in a progressive manner, and the consideration of planning applications to be received for development proposals led by URA as well as those by the private sector. As for the five Development Nodes (DNs) recommended by the YMDS, which are all large-scale urban renewal concept plans, the implementation of these DNs would inevitably require detailed and comprehensive technical assessments, and would involve complicated planning procedures and substantive resources. To

support the planning visions and to encourage private sector to participate in taking forward the DNs, as indicated in the Government's reply in DEVB(PL)019, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has been working closely with the relevant departments and the URA to implement the new planning tools recommended by the YMDS. We expect the relevant amendments made to Mong Kok OZP will be completed in mid-2023. We are now working to initiate similar amendments to Yau Ma Tei OZP and promulgate Town Planning Board guidelines to implement a pilot scheme on transfer of plot ratio in mid-2023. The Government will, taking into account the readiness of individual recommendations, continue to adopt the approach of "implementation as and when ready" in taking forward the recommendations of YMDS.

As for the district studies respectively for Sham Shui Po and Tsuen Wan, which were commenced in Q3 and Q4 2022 respectively, the Government will consider the feasibility to formulate implementation timetable for the recommendations to be made by the studies as far as practicable.

2. The Government's reply in DEVB(PL)019 has set out the Government's financial support made to URA thus far as well as the Government's plan to raise the borrowing limit of URA to enhance the latter's financial capability in undertaking a number of sizeable redevelopment projects in the coming years. Apart from this, in recent years the URA has consolidated "Government, Institution or Community" sites in the vicinity in suitable redevelopment projects. Such site amalgamation not only provides an opportunity to re-provision and upgrade public facilities, it can also increase the overall development potential of the redevelopment projects, which is also a form of financial support rendered by the Government to the URA. We will continue this approach where appropriate. In parallel, to encourage greater participation by private developers in urban renewal, the Government aims to introduce an amendment bill into the Legislative Council in the latter half of 2023 to update and streamline the compulsory sale regime under the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance (Cap. 545).

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. SV006)

Head: (138) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Planning and Lands Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Buildings, Lands and Planning

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
(Ms Doris HO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

What is the progress of the project “The Hong Kong Polytechnic University - Study of the Green Deck” upon referral to the Development Bureau for follow-up action?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

The Project Development Study of the Green Deck (the Study) commissioned by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) was one of the projects being included in the Chief Executive’s Community Project List in 2019. With funding support from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, PolyU commissioned a consultant to carry out the Study for ascertaining the technical feasibility of constructing a Green Deck over the toll plaza of the Hung Hom Cross-Harbour Tunnel in November 2020.

The former Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) had been offering assistance to PolyU in taking forward the Study through liaising with the relevant departments under its “first-stop and one-stop” project consultation and co-ordination services for innovative projects. With the former PICO ceasing operation on 1 July 2022, the project has been referred to the Development Bureau (DEVB).

The Study aims at developing in greater details the design of the Green Deck, ascertaining its technical feasibility through conducting a series of assessments pertaining to areas including traffic, environmental, drainage, and fire safety, etc., as well as collecting views from the community through engaging different stakeholders. Various technical assessments have been completed and the proposal has been further refined taking into account views from various stakeholders. Since July 2022, DEVB has been maintaining dialogues with PolyU on the likely recommendations of the Study and possible follow-up actions. PolyU is currently at the stage of wrapping up the Study which is expected to be completed in 2023.

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