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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2021-22

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)01

(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 Bernadette LINN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Please list out the district, number and area of the sites available for application for agricultural rehabilitation under the “Special Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme”.

Asked by: Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Reply:

The Government has been processing the Special Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme (SALRS) applications from the eligible farmers affected by the first phase development of Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Area project with a view to allocating the re-farming land to these farmers in a timely manner to tie in with their removal in phases. So far, the following SALRS farmlands have been offered to the farmers with departure dates on or before Q1/2021:

Locations	Gross Site Area (hectare)
Wa Shan	0.63
Ma Tso Lung	0.34
Total	0.97

We will continue to process the remaining SALRS applications and identify suitable land for the purpose.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**S-DEVB(PL)02****(Question Serial No. S0019)**

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 Bernadette LINN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the “over 210 sites with housing development potential in the short to medium term” mentioned in the reply, it is indicated in the 2020-21 Budget that the Government would commence rezoning procedures for 25 sites thereof. Please inform this Committee of the following:

- a. Locations and current uses of these 25 sites;
- b. Number of sites with rezoning completed over the past year, as well as their locations.

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan

Reply:

Of these 25 sites, the rezoning procedures for seven started in 2020-21 and are yet to be completed. Their locations and uses at the time of rezoning are shown below –

District	Site	Uses at the time of rezoning
Eastern	Between Cheung Man Road and Chai Wan Park	Sloping ground with vegetation
Tsuen Wan	Near Cheung Shan Estate, Tsuen Wan	Fresh water service reservoir and adjoining vegetated slopes
	Po Fung Terrace, Tsuen Wan	Sloping ground with vegetation
Sha Tin	Lower part of Ma On Shan Tsuen Road, Ma On Shan	Sloping ground with vegetation
	Upper part of Ma On Shan Tsuen Road, Ma On Shan	Vacant land with vegetation and some buildings/structures
Tai Po	East of Cheung Muk Tau, Ma On Shan	Sloping ground with vegetation
	South of Symphony Bay, Ma On Shan	Sloping ground with vegetation

For the remaining 18 sites, rezoning proposals will be formulated upon completion of the necessary technical studies/assessments and subject to their findings.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)03

(Question Serial No. SV009)

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 Bernadette LINN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

There are six sites with rezoning proposal not agreed by the Town Planning Board, including a site north of Tseung Kwan O Village. Please provide the reasons for rejecting the rezoning proposal as well as the relevant information concerning this site.

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan

Reply:

The subject site is located to the north of Tseung Kwan O Village and covers an area of about 3.94 hectares. On 21 June 2018, after hearing of representations and comments relating to the amendments to the Tseung Kwan O Outline Zoning Plan, the Town Planning Board considered that the site should not be rezoned to “Residential (Group A)7” and decided to revert the site to “Green Belt” zone mainly on the grounds that the site was relatively distant from Tseung Kwan O Town Centre and not abutting any existing road, the construction of a new access road would lead to extensive site formation works and affect the natural slope, and the proposed high-rise housing development was not compatible with the surrounding low-rise developments.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)04

(Question Serial No. SV008)

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 Bernadette LINN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) The number of sites with unpopular public facilities planned by the Government over the past ten years; and
- (b) Among these sites, how many are adjacent to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area? Is there any room for the Government to review and adjust the uses of these sites? What are the feasible options, as well as the financial resources involved?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply:

- (a) There is no commonly accepted definition of “unpopular public facilities”. By nature, public facilities serve community needs in one way or another, although some facilities may generate impact (e.g. noise) that needs to be addressed. In taking forward these projects, the responsible government bureaux/departments would give due consideration to relevant factors, and conduct appropriate impact assessments and propose necessary mitigation measures to address the adverse impact (e.g. odour, noise and visual impacts), if any. Take T-PARK as an example. Through adoption of advanced technologies and unique design to improve functionality, T-PARK has not only served its function as Hong Kong’s first self-sustained sludge treatment facilities, but also become a popular destination for visitors and residents.
- (b) In response to evolving circumstances providing new opportunities for Hong Kong, including the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Government has reviewed the planning of areas in closer vicinity to the various boundary control points to capitalise on the geographical advantage. For instance, in

the “Hong Kong 2030+ : Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” published in 2016, a “northern economic belt” is proposed for research and development, modern logistics, warehousing and other emerging industries. The major developments currently under construction or planning in the relevant areas include the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Lok Ma Chau Loop, the San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node, Man Kam To Logistics Corridor, and the NTN New Town, involving a total of more than 1 500 hectares of land.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)05

(Question Serial No. S0020)

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 Bernadette LINN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the reply on brownfield development, it is indicated earlier that the Development Bureau had examined with relevant departments how to further simplify and expedite the subsequent work, including compressing the time required for engineering feasibility studies (EFSs) as far as possible, speeding up such statutory procedures as rezoning, gazettal of works and land resumption immediately upon completion of EFSs, and pursuing certain procedures concurrently as circumstances would permit, with a view to shortening the land production time from at least eight years to about six years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. For the development plans of the 450 hectares of brownfield sites mentioned in the reply, which aspects of work and procedures can be simplified and expedited?
- b. Is it possible for other development plans (such as new development areas or other development projects) to adopt the said compressed work processes, and to pursue certain procedures concurrently? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon MAK Mei-kuen, Alice

Reply:

- a. The Planning Department has completed the two-phase review on 450 hectares of brownfield sites, which are outside New Development Areas (NDA) and other areas with known development projects but may have higher development potential. A total of 12 brownfield clusters have been shortlisted as having potential for public housing development in the short to medium term. It is roughly estimated that these brownfield clusters altogether may produce over 30 000 public housing units. As far as these 12 brownfield clusters are concerned, relevant departments are doing their best to compress the time required for engineering feasibility studies (EFSs), and plan for expediting the running and completion of relevant statutory and administrative

procedures (such as rezoning, gazettal of works, funding applications, land resumption and clearance), so as to transform them into “spade-ready sites” and hand them over to the relevant authority for construction of public housing in about six years or less. In so doing, we aim at compressing the time needed for delivery of housing units on the identified sites to within ten years approximately, counting from the commencement of EFS for each of these 12 clusters.

- b. Much as we want to expedite the land development process as far as possible, the timetable for these work processes for individual development projects may be subject to different constraints and often evolves along the way, taking into account new factors and circumstances such as identification and resolution of unforeseen technical constraints, nature and number of public comments received, complications with resumption and clearance, etc.

In any event, apart from compressing the aforesaid work processes to turn individual brownfield clusters into “spade-ready sites”, we are also pressing ahead with other land supply measures contributing to the early supply of land for housing and other developments, including, for example, advancing the studies of the remaining portions of New Territories North NDA. Also, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has expanded the composition and remit of the Steering Group on Streamlining Development Control to include vetting departments other than those under the DEVB, with a view to reviewing more comprehensively the approval processes of development projects, and rationalising the development-related requirements imposed by different bureaux. It is our intention to ultimately apply streamlined processes emerging in the course of the review exercise to development projects in general.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)06

(Question Serial No. S0021)

Head: (82) Buildings Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (YU Tak-cheung)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Some 20 000 unauthorised building works (UBWs) were removed in each of the past 5 years. Have all UBWs that posed higher potential risks been handled, or does it mean that the problem has gradually improved? Has the Buildings Department (BD) maintained information about the external UBWs in Hong Kong? If not, how does it determine the priority of enforcement actions against UBWs on a "risk-based" approach? Does BD rely solely on public reports?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

The Buildings Department (BD) adopts a "risk-based" approach in determining the priority of enforcement actions against unauthorised building works (UBWs), by targeting those UBWs constituting obvious or imminent danger to life or property and newly built UBWs for priority enforcement action. BD has been identifying those UBWs warranting priority action by singling out those cases in the course of its handling public reports or referral from other government departments, as well as in the course of its proactive large scale operations (LSOs) under which target buildings are selected for inspections each year. These LSOs include (i) one for clearing actionable UBWs in common area and UBWs on rooftops, flat roofs, yards and lanes in 80 target domestic/composite buildings per annum; (ii) one for rectifying irregularities of building works associated with the sub-divided flats (SDFs) in 80 target domestic/composite buildings per annum; (iii) one for eradicating illegal domestic SDFs and premises in 20 target industrial buildings per annum; and (iv) one for removing unauthorised signboards on about ten target streets sections and 170 large unauthorised signboards per annum. As a result of these LSOs, BD has been taking enforcement action against irregularities warranting priority action in the target buildings in one go. The above approach of identifying UBWs warranting priority enforcement action does not involve any stocktaking of external UBWs across the territory.

Under the ten-year UBWs removal programme that ended in March 2011, UBWs including projecting structures, steel cages, large canopies, large glass panel external walls, large television screens, large signboards, UBWs contravening fire safety requirements and UBWs on canopies and cantilevered slab balconies were targeted for enforcement actions. BD also targeted to clear the unauthorised rooftop structures on single-staircase buildings which caused significant fire risks during that ten-year period. By the end of March 2011, nearly 12 000 buildings had been covered in the various enforcement programmes, with over 400 000 UBWs demolished and most of the high-risk UBWs had been removed.

To strengthen enforcement against UBWs, BD extended the coverage of UBWs warranting priority action to include all UBWs on roof-tops, podiums, yards and lanes of the buildings in April 2011. With this extension, BD is in effect taking priority enforcement actions against most, if not all, UBWs found on the façade and exterior of a building.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(PL)07

(Question Serial No. SV007)

Head: (91) Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Andrew LAI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding short-term tenancy applications involving vacant government sites, how many of these applications made by bodies from the sports, performing arts, culture and publication sectors are being processed by the Lands Department?

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok

Reply:

Among the 101 short-term tenancy applications for vacant government sites (including vacant school premises) being processed by the Lands Department as at 31 December 2020, 36 applications were from organisations relating to sports, performing arts, culture and publication.

- End -