

# Government responds to report of Task Force on Land Supply (with photos)

The Government announced today (February 20) in a detailed response that it has fully accepted the recommendations tendered by the Task Force on Land Supply (TFLS) on land supply strategy and eight land supply options worthy of priority studies and implementation.

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, said, "The problem of land shortage in Hong Kong is pressing. The Government fully agrees with the observations of the TFLS on land demand forecasts and establishment of a land reserve, and will accordingly implement a more robust and visionary land supply strategy to sustain and significantly increase land supply.

"The land supply strategy comprises the following five elements: (i) increase land supply on a sustained basis as the core strategy; (ii) aim to build up a land reserve; (iii) continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy; (iv) commission technical assessments and studies as early as possible; and (v) adopt an infrastructure-led and capacity creating approach in planning and providing strategic transport infrastructure."

Mr Wong said, "To strengthen the Government's high-level steer in overseeing and coordinating the strategy and planning of land supply, the composition and terms of reference of the existing Steering Committee on Land Supply (SCLS) chaired by the Financial Secretary would be expanded. The expanded SCLS will adopt a vision-driven and forward-looking approach in re-assessing our land demand for housing, economic, community and recreational needs and the scale of land reserve that we should target for. The revised assessment will be incorporated into the final strategy for 'Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030' to be released in the latter half of 2019."

As regards land supply options, Mr Wong said the Government will implement a number of specific measures to take forward the eight land supply options worthy of priority studies and implementation as recommended by the TFLS, including expediting brownfield development; drawing up details of the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme to unleash development potential of private agricultural land; developing 32 hectares of land east of Fan Kam Road of the Fanling Golf Course for housing development and commencing relevant detailed technical study; expediting studies on the some 1000-hectare Kau Yi Chau artificial islands; expediting studies on near-shore reclamation projects including Lung Kwu Tan, Sunny Bay and Siu Ho Wan; continuing cavern and underground space development and studies; pressing ahead with New Development Area projects; and commencing studies on the River Trade Terminal site and the coastal areas of Tuen Mun. Besides, he said that the Government will not at this stage further pursue the alternative land use of country park periphery.

Mr Wong said the next step of the Government is to pull together the efforts of relevant bureaux and departments in finding and creating land at full steam to ensure a sustained and sufficient supply of land, not only to meet the development needs of Hong Kong in different times and for different purposes, but also to prepare for rainy days and build up a land reserve, thereby creating more favourable conditions for our housing, livelihood and long-term development. He said, "The Government is determined and confident to implement the enhanced land supply strategy and eight priority land supply options. We hope that members of society can join hands and render support to the Government's efforts, including securing funding approval from the Legislative Council for commencing various studies and works, so as to take forward the recommendations of the TFLS as soon as possible."

Having conducted an extensive public engagement exercise, the TFLS submitted its report to the Government on December 31, 2018. The Government's response to the recommendations and major comments in the report of the TFLS is at Annex.



## LCQ6: Major works under Shatin-to-Central Link Project

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Cheuk-ting and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

Under the Project Integration Management System of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), there are a number of hold points for the construction works for the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project, which is currently undertaken by MTRCL. At each hold point, the contractor is required to submit a Request for Inspection and Survey Checks (RISC) form to MTRCL upon completion of a certain construction activity; the contractor may proceed with the next activity only after MTRCL has confirmed after checking that no problem is

found and granted permission. However, the Government has recently announced that a number of problems concerning the construction works at the SCL Hung Hom Station North and South Approach Tunnels and Stabling Sidings were uncovered, including the missing of materials testing records and a large quantity of RISC forms, as well as unauthorized alterations of the construction methods. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will request the Secretary for Transport and Housing, who is a MTRCL Board member, to take the blame for problems concerning the construction works of the SCL project being uncovered one after another and resign;

(2) whether the Highways Department and its consultants have regularly reviewed if the construction works of the SCL project were undertaken in accordance with the work procedures, including the checking of the RISC forms; if not, of the reasons for that; if so, the frequencies of such reviews and whether cases of RISC forms missing have been found; whether the Government and MTRCL have looked into the reasons for RISC forms missing (whether such reasons include the destruction of evidence by some works personnel for fear of their contravention of the rules being uncovered), and why the contractor, at various hold points, was allowed to proceed with the next construction activity even though the RISC forms concerned were missing; and

(3) of the quantity and percentage of the materials testing records which are missing, as well as the materials involved; with such records missing, how the Government ascertains that the materials used for the works and the works quality on the whole comply with the safety standards; whether there is any case of missing RISC forms and materials testing records concerning other works sites of the SCL project; if so, set out the relevant quantities and percentages in a table?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the three parts of the Hon Lam Cheuk-ting's question is as follows:

The major works under the Shatin-to-Central Link (SCL) Project commenced in 2012 under the service concession approach. MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) was entrusted by the Government to design, construct, test and commission the SCL Project and the Government monitors and verifies the implementation of the SCL Project by the MTRCL on the premise of the "Check the checker" approach. In accordance with a risk-based assessment, the Highways Department (HyD) and its Monitoring and Verification (M&V) Consultant conduct random audits to check if the main procedures and arrangements for the execution of the works by MTRCL have met the obligations under the Entrustment Agreement signed with the Government.

In general, HyD and its M&V Consultant inspect the works under 6 to 8 contracts every month and, for the works at Hung Hom Station Extension (HUH), once every 3 months. After the incident about the allegation of the cutting of steel bars at HUH, HyD had reviewed the relevant site inspection work and, with effect from August 2018, increased the frequency of site inspection to nine to 11 contracts every month and, for the works at HUH, once every month. Taking into account the experience of the implementation of large-scale infrastructure, HyD and its M&V Consultant have focused on such aspects as project expenditure, works progress and public safety during the inspections. At present, monitoring of structural safety has been strengthened in the regular inspections.

In accordance with the Project Integrated Management System (PIMS) of the MTRCL, there are hold points for certain construction activities (e.g. formwork erection, steel bar fixing and concreting, etc.). When the contractor completes the works and inspection at a hold point and requires an inspection or survey to be conducted by the engineering personnel of MTRCL, the contractor shall submit a Request for Inspection and Survey Check (RISC) Form asking the engineering personnel of MTRCL to conduct inspection or survey before proceeding with the next step. The RISC Form is to record the information about the inspection or survey conducted by the relevant personnel from the contractor and MTRCL, e.g. inspection and survey date and time, names of person in-charge etc. The Form is a tool for recording the process of the works executed by the contractor and the supervision conducted by MTRCL. These site records could be used for auditing in the future, if needed.

At the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways Meeting under Legislative Council Panel on Transport held on February 1, 2019, MTRCL indicated that the RISC Forms about the relevant steelworks in respect of North Approach Tunnels, South Approach Tunnels and Hung Hom Stabling Sidings were only 27%, 64% and 37% respectively of the total numbers of RISC Forms required for filing. HyD requested MTRCL in writing to submit a detailed situation report on the missing of RISC Forms by the end of February 2019. The Government is still awaiting the reply from MTRCL.

The extent of missing site records in the present case under the SCL Project is unusual. MTRCL revealed that, apart from RISC Forms, the missing site records also included the detailed information about and the extent of, in respect of some connections, a change in design during construction from the original lapping of steel bars to coupler connections; as well as material test records. Government has already referred the case to law enforcement department for follow-up action and will fully facilitate the investigation.

Regarding the condition of other stations, we have implemented a three-tier audit as follows:

Firstly, the Government has already asked MTRCL to conduct an internal audit on major works under other stations, including whether site records are complete and whether design drawings have been amended in accordance with

established procedures.

Secondly, HyD and its M&V Consultant will conduct audits on other SCL stations under the supervision of the Expert Adviser Team of Transport and Housing Bureau. The first stage audit covers To Kwa Wan Station and Diamond Hill Station and will focus on quality control of works and supervision records. This is extremely important because the audit will look into structural safety and give recommendations on strengthening works if necessary. Depending on the results of the audit, we will adjust the scale of the audit for the remaining stations.

Finally, for the purpose of vetting, MTRCL has to submit to the Government the relevant completion certificate, record drawings, test reports on construction materials and certificates.

According to the provisions of the Articles of Association of MTRCL and the regulations adopted by the MTRCL Board, the Board focuses on handling matters about the corporation's overall strategies, corporate governance, finances and shareholder issues, while the day-to-day running of the corporation is the responsibility of the management, who shall report to the Board. Government Directors do not differ from all other directors of the Board in terms of their role and duties; and have all along discharged their duties and at the same time, reflected the general concerns of the Government and the community about the management and operation of the MTRCL.

As the investigation into the SCL Project is still under way, I am duty bound to study the incidents thoroughly and upon ascertaining the facts and the root of the problems, take pro-active measures to rectify the problems so that the SCL Project can be implemented continuously for completion and commissioning as soon as possible on the condition that quality of the works is not compromised. The Government will take actions against concerned parties and safeguard the interest of the Government and the public. Thank you, President.

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## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit heat-not-burn products](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (February 19) seized about 38 000 sticks of suspected illicit heat-not-burn (HNB) products with an estimated market value of about \$110,000 and a duty potential of about \$70,000 at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Tokyo, Japan yesterday night. During Customs clearance, the batch of suspected illicit HNB products were found inside the luggage carried by him. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 56, has been charged with one count of possession of goods to which Dutiable Commodities Ordinance applies and one count of failing to declare to a member of the Customs and Excise Service. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (February 21).

Customs reminds members of the public that under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO), tobacco is dutiable goods to which DCO applies. Any HNB products containing tobacco in content is also dutiable goods subject to the control of DCO. Any person who possesses, sells or buys dutiable commodities without a valid license commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years. Members of the public may call the Customs' hotline 2815 7711 regarding whether specific tobacco or smoking product is under the regulation of DCO.

Members of the public may also report any suspected violation of the DCO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

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## CHP investigates suspected food poisoning outbreak

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 20) investigating a suspected outbreak of food poisoning affecting 13 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The patients, comprising six men and seven women aged 24 to 42, developed abdominal pain, nausea, fever, diarrhoea and vomiting about 14 to 61 hours after having a dinner buffet at a restaurant in Causeway Bay on February 16.

Ten of them sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;

- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
  - Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
  - Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
  - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
  - Drink boiled water;
  - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
  - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
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## Missing woman in Sham Shui Po located

A woman who went missing in Sham Shui Po has been located.

Chan Wai-lin, aged 62, went missing after she left her residence in Fu Cheong Estate on February 17 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on the same day.

The woman returned to her residence in the small hours of this morning (February 20). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.