

# Land Sharing Pilot Scheme opens for applications tomorrow

The Development Bureau (DEVB) today (May 5) announced that the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme (LSPS) will open for applications tomorrow for a period of three years until May 5, 2023, subject to a cap of 150 hectares on the total area of private land to be approved.

In connection with the launch of the LSPS, the Chief Executive has appointed 10 members, coming from a wide spectrum of sectors, to a Panel of Advisors to offer independent opinions on the applications received and advise on the operation of the LSPS. Chaired by Dr David Wong Yau-kar, the Panel of Advisors will run for a term of 3.5 years with effect from May 1 this year.

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, said the LSPS aims to help unleash development potential of private land with consolidated ownership that is outside specified environmentally sensitive areas and not covered by the Government's development studies.

"While government-led planning and land resumption remains the mainstream and continues to dominate our land creation agenda, the LSPS seeks to complement such efforts by tapping into market resources and efficiencies to boost both public and private housing in the short to medium term," he said.

Under the scheme, the Government will facilitate infrastructural improvements that will enhance the development intensity of the private lots under application. In return, the LSPS applicants are required to hand over to the Government part of the lots they own in the form of formed land that is capable of delivering at least 70 per cent of the increased domestic gross floor area (GFA) for public housing or Starter Homes developments intended by the Government.

To ensure speedy delivery of the housing gains under the LSPS, the developer-lot owners will also be responsible for developing the necessary infrastructure and other community facilities to support the whole public and private housing development. The associated costs will be deducted from the land premiums charged at full market value after vigorous vetting by the Government to ensure necessity and cost-effectiveness.

Each project under the LSPS should be capable of delivering an increased domestic GFA of no less than 50 000 square metres in total and at least 1 000 additional housing units.

Under the three-stage implementation approach, the dedicated, multi-disciplinary Land Sharing Office set up under the DEVB will provide one-stop advisory and facilitation services to the LSPS applicants and vet the applications received. The Panel of Advisors shall advise on the

acceptability of these applications; only those cases receiving support from the Panel will be submitted to the Chief Executive in Council for endorsement in principle. The applications so endorsed will then enter into the next stage comprising statutory processes such as rezoning and gazettal of infrastructure works, as well as land administration procedures including premium negotiations. All established public participation channels under the applicable statutory processes will continue to apply.

"Time is of the essence. The Land Sharing Office will work under a highly compressed timetable, while statutory processes will be undertaken concurrently (rather than in sequence) as far as practicable to save time. We expect to conclude the lease modification process including premium negotiations within an 18-month time limit after rezoning, unless an extension is granted. Our target is to convert the agricultural lots into spade-ready sites ready for housing construction within four to 6.5 years from the time applications are received," Mr Wong said.

Mr Wong is thankful for the general support and valuable feedback offered by various stakeholders since the Government unveiled the proposed framework of the LSPS in the 2019 Policy Address. Suitable refinements to specific details have been made to address those comments while upholding the public interest enshrined in the LSPS.

The membership of the Panel of Advisors is as follows –

#### Chairman

---

Dr David Wong Yau-kar

#### Members

---

Ms Ada Fung Yin-suen  
Professor Eddie Hui Chi-man  
Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing  
Professor Jimmy Leung Cheuk-fai  
Mr Timothy Ma Kam-wah  
Dr Billy Mak Sui-choi  
Professor Wong Sze-chun  
Mr Marco Wu Moon-hoi  
Mr John Yan Mang-yee

Details of the LSPS are set out in the Legislative Council Brief (Annex) issued today. These, together with information relating to the LSPS including the application form, guidance notes for applicants and operation of the Panel of Advisors have been uploaded to the DEVB's dedicated webpage ([www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues\\_in\\_focus/land\\_sharing\\_pilot\\_scheme/index.html](http://www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/land_sharing_pilot_scheme/index.html)). To uphold transparency, regular updates will be published covering the gist of the applications received and progress of each case.

---

## **2020 Honours and Awards Exercise postponed**

The annual honours and awards selection and appointment of Justices of the Peace (JPs) exercise this year will be postponed, and so will the announcement of the list of honours and awards as well as the JP appointments.

Announcing this today (May 5), a Government spokesman said, "To accord top priority to the on-going anti-epidemic work and implementation of the host of relief measures aimed at retaining employment, supporting businesses and easing people's livelihood in face of the challenges arising from the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government has decided to defer the 2020 honours and awards selection and appointment of JPs exercise. Instead of July 1 as in previous years, the Honours list and appointments of JPs will be announced on October 1."

Honours and awards are awarded to individuals in recognition of their significant contribution to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or their dedicated public and community service. JPs are appointed under the Justices of the Peace Ordinance (Cap. 510) with the main function of visiting custodial institutions or detention centres. The annual Honours List and the list of new JP appointments are normally published in the Government Gazette on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day (July 1).

---

## **Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 5), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 15 patients (eight male and seven female, aged 7 to 82) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 142 patients under isolation currently. So far, 920 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

---

## Provisional statistics of retail sales for March 2020

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (May 5).

The value of total retail sales in March 2020, provisionally estimated at \$23.0 billion, decreased by 42.0% compared with the same month in 2019. The revised estimate of the combined value of total retail sales in January and February 2020 decreased by 31.8% compared with the same period a year earlier. For the first quarter of 2020, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales decreased by 35.0% compared with the same period in 2019.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in March 2020 decreased by 43.8% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the combined volume of total retail sales in January and February 2020 decreased by 33.9% compared with the same period a year earlier. For the first quarter of 2020, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 36.9% in volume compared with the same period in 2019.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing March 2020 with March 2019, the value of sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco decreased by 21.2%. This was followed by sales of commodities in department stores (-42.7% in value); other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified (-29.1%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (-39.6%); jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts (-75.2%); medicines and cosmetics (-63.8%); wearing apparel (-67.2%); motor vehicles and parts (-19.8%); fuels (-8.0%); furniture and fixtures (-14.4%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (-48.4%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-51.7%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (-60.6%); and optical shops (-46.6%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of commodities in supermarkets increased by 16.1% in March 2020 over a year earlier.

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales decreased by 19.6% in the first quarter of 2020 compared with the preceding quarter, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 20.4%.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics.

The retail sales statistics cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

#### Commentary

A government spokesman said that retail sales continued to plummet in March, as the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting anti-epidemic measures brought inbound tourism to a standstill and seriously disrupted consumption-related activities. For the first quarter as a whole, the volume of retail sales fell by 36.9% year-on-year, the largest decline for a single quarter on record.

The spokesman further pointed out that the business environment for retail trade will remain very difficult in the near term amid the deep economic recession and sharp deterioration in the labour market. The Government will monitor the developments closely.

#### Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for February 2020 as well as the provisional figures for March 2020. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first quarter of 2020 are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for February 2020 as

well as the provisional figures for March 2020. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first quarter of 2020 are also shown.

Table 3 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD

([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080003](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080003)).

Alternatively, the historical series of retail sales statistics can be downloaded in the form of a statistical table at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=D5600089](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=D5600089)).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; Email: [mrs@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:mrs@censtatd.gov.hk)).

---

## **CHP announces no new local confirmed cases of COVID-19 today**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 5), no new local confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remained at 1 041 so far (comprising 1 040 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly

urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 3pm today, a total of 104 503 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work

or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.