

LCQ10: Issues relating to illegal parking

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

It has been reported that the situation of illegal parking has become more serious across the territory in recent months, and the shortage of parking spaces has aggravated the problem of illegal parking. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the numbers of vehicles (i) newly registered and (ii) deregistered last year, with a tabulated breakdown by class of vehicles;
- (2) of (i) the respective numbers of publicly and privately operated public parking spaces across the territory last year, and (ii) the respective estimated additional numbers of these two types of parking spaces this year, with a tabulated breakdown by District Council (DC) district and class of vehicles;
- (3) of the number of parking spaces in Hong Kong and the ratio of such number to the number of vehicles at present; whether it has considered amending the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines to raise the number of parking spaces needed to be provided for various types of facilities; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will consider taking measures to reduce the number of vehicles;
- (4) as the Government indicated in May last year that it had commissioned a consultancy study to take forward pilot projects of automated parking systems (APSs) at six suitable sites and an APS could increase the number of parking spaces by 30% to a double, of the progress of the study and whether it will identify more car parks for installation of APSs;
- (5) of the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued in each of the past 12 months by the Police by invoking the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) against various types of parking contraventions, with a tabulated breakdown by (i) police region and (ii) type of contravention;
- (6) whether there is a big difference when the number of FPNs issued by various police regions in respect of vehicles parked illegally in the past 12 months is compared with the relevant number in the preceding 12 months; if so, of the reasons for that;
- (7) of the current number of illegal parking black spots in Hong Kong, with a

tabulated breakdown by DC district; and

(8) as I have learnt that in locations where schools, tutorial schools and interest class studios stand in great numbers (e.g. Beech Street in Tai Kok Tsui, To Fuk Road and Rutland Quadrant in Kowloon Tong, Un Chau Street in Sham Shui Po, and Hing Wah Street and Castle Peak Road in Cheung Sha Wan), the problem of illegal stopping and waiting of private cars is serious during the hours of going to and finishing classes each day, and there are also a large number of goods vehicles and tourist coaches parked illegally at night, in respect of the illegal parking/stopping and waiting of vehicles in the aforesaid locations, (i) the number of patrol operations conducted and the average number of such vehicles found during each operation, and (ii) the number of FPNs issued, by the Police in each of the past six months; apart from stepping up patrol operations, of the Police's other measures to step up efforts in combating the problem of illegal parking/stopping and waiting of vehicles in the aforesaid locations?

Reply:

President,

After consultation with the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and Transport Department (TD), my reply to the various parts of the Hon James To's question is as follows.

(1) The numbers of vehicles first registered and deregistered in 2019 with a breakdown by class of vehicles are tabulated at Annex 1.

(2) As at February 2020, the numbers of public parking spaces provided by the Government and parking spaces provided at privately-operated car parks available for public use across the territory are tabulated at Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively. Since the number in the provision of new parking spaces hinges on a host of factors, including the views of stakeholders as well as the progress of seeking funding approval for and the actual implementation of the works projects, etc., TD does not have a specific projection on the number of parking spaces to be provided in 2020.

(3) As at December 2019, the number of private cars (including van-type light goods vehicles that can be accommodated within private car parking spaces) was 624 990 and the number of parking spaces available for private cars was 683 736. The parking space to private car ratio was 1.09.

In response to public aspirations, TD is reviewing the standards on parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for commercial vehicles as well as the standards on parking spaces for private cars stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) with a view to updating the relevant requirements, thereby increasing the number of parking spaces in future housing developments. We anticipate that after consulting relevant stakeholders, the revised guidelines will be promulgated within 2020. Prior to that, TD will continue to require developers to provide parking spaces at the higher end of the current parking standards under HKPSG for new

developments as far as practicable.

(4) TD is taking forward six pilot projects on automated parking systems (APSs) so as to acquire and consolidate experience in building, operating and managing different types of APSs and the associated financial arrangements. This will pave the way for wider application of APSs in government and privately-operated public car parks in future.

TD has so far identified four sites for launching the APS pilot projects, having regard to such criteria as parking demand, geographical environment, planning restrictions, impact on local traffic, etc. The identified sites include a short-term tenancy (STT) site on Hoi Shing Road, Tsuen Wan; a public open space site at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po; and two proposed sites for government buildings on Chung Kong Road in Sheung Wan and Sheung Mau Street in Chai Wan. For the above-mentioned STT site in Tsuen Wan, TD has already secured support from the Tsuen Wan District Council, and it is expected that tenders could be invited in mid-2020. As regards the pilot project in Sham Shui Po, TD is currently assessing the technical feasibility after securing support from the Sham Shui Po District Council. For the APS pilot projects in Sheung Wan and Chai Wan, TD will consult relevant District Councils in due course.

(5) The numbers of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued by the Police under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance, with breakdowns by police regions and offences, between February 2019 and January 2020 are tabulated at Annex 4.

(6) Since June 2019, Hong Kong has seen widespread vandalism committed by violent protestors across the territory. The Police have been discharging their duties with commitment and devotion with a view to restoring social order as soon as possible, and safeguarding the lives and property of the public.

On enforcement action against illegal parking, the Police issued a total of about 1.4 million FPNs against illegal parking in 2019. Given the Police's limited manpower, the traffic enforcement figures for the second half of 2019 indeed showed a decrease as compared to the corresponding period of 2018. Nevertheless, with less tension in the recent social atmosphere, all police districts in the territory have re-deployed their manpower to step up traffic enforcement operations and, as a result, traffic enforcement figures from December 2019 onwards have started to rebound.

(7) At present, the Police have no definition of what constitutes a "black spot" of illegal parking. Hence, no information on the number of illegal parking "black spots" in different districts could be provided. The Police will step up law enforcement at road sections where severe traffic congestion occurs. Drivers causing serious traffic obstructions and posing road safety hazards will be issued FPNs without prior warning, or even will have their illegally parked vehicles towed away by the Police.

(8) The Police have neither maintained figures on the number of patrol

operations conducted, the number of illegally parked vehicles found in each operation, nor the number of FPNs issued for specific road sections, and therefore no such information is available.

Road safety is one of the operational priorities of the Police. Changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users that causes traffic obstructions is also among the Police's traffic enforcement priorities. All along, the Police pay much attention to the problem of illegal parking and seek to change such undesirable behaviour through publicity and education, and combat illegal parking through patrols and law enforcement. For drivers who commit traffic offences by causing traffic obstructions, the Police will issue warnings or summons, or even tow away the vehicles concerned.

Regarding the illegal parking situation at the road sections mentioned in the question, the Police have reminded their relevant police districts to heighten their attention and step up law enforcement against illegal parking therein. Should there be serious illegal parking on individual road sections causing obstruction to traffic, members of the public may report such cases to the Police for prompt handling.

LCQ1: Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund

Following is a question by the Hon Poon Siu-ping and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

Some trade unions have relayed that in recent months, quite a number of workers who have been owed wages have applied for ex gratia payments from the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund (the Fund) but, after a protracted period of time, have not been issued such payments for meeting their imminent needs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Of the respective numbers of applications for ex gratia payments (i) received, (ii) processed and (iii) approved, by the Fund in each month since January 2019, and the respective numbers of employees involved in such applications;

(2) Of (i) the average and (ii) the longest durations between the time when the Labour Department (LD) received a request for assistance from an employee in respect of wage defaults and the time when all information needed for processing the employee's application for an ex gratia payment by the Fund was available, in the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, of

the reasons for that;

(3) Of (i) the average and (ii) the longest duration between the time when LD received a request for assistance from an employee in respect of wage defaults and the time when the Fund disbursed an ex gratia payment to the employee concerned, in the past three years; if such figures are unavailable, of the reasons for that;

(4) Given that the number of applications to the Fund for ex gratia payments is expected to increase sharply in the coming few months amid Hong Kong's worsening economic situation, whether LD will deploy additional manpower to process such applications, and whether the Government will consider revamping the procedures for applying for and disbursement of ex gratia payments with a view to expediting the disbursement to applicants of those ex gratia payments related to undisputed payments on default; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) As the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund Board has indicated that in 2018-2019, it continued its review of the scope of protection of the Fund and the ceilings for ex gratia payments, of the progress and outcome of the review?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) From January 2019 to March 2020, the number of applications received in each month by the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund (the Fund) is set out at Annex 1. During the same period, the number of applications processed and the number of applications with ex gratia payment approved are set out at Annex 2. Applications are reckoned on a per-employee basis. Hence, the number of applications is the same as the number of employees involved.

(2) and (3) Upon receipt of applications to the Fund from employees, the Labour Department (LD) will kick off the procedures of handling such applications immediately, which include liaising with employers, provisional liquidators/liquidators, trustees of Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) schemes, the Legal Aid Department, and, where necessary, requesting the applicants to provide further information, etc., for the purpose of collecting the necessary information and documents for verifying the applications and making ex gratia payment. Ex gratia payment could only be granted to qualified applicants after LD has received all the relevant information and documents required for processing the applications. Yet whether the information and documents are adequate is often beyond the control of LD (for example, it takes a longer time for individual employers or liquidators to compile the employment records of employees, individual employees are unable to promptly furnish information to support their applications, etc.). As such, LD does not keep information on the durations between the time when LD receives a request for assistance from an employee in respect of wage defaults and the

time when all information needed for processing the employee's application for an ex gratia payment by the Fund is available or the time when the Fund effects an ex gratia payment to the employee concerned. Instead, LD keeps information on the time required to effect payment upon receipt of all information and documents required for processing the applications. From 2017 to 2019, the average time and the longest time required to effect payment upon receipt of all information and documents required for processing the applications by LD are set out at Annex 3.

(4) The number of applications to the Fund has been closely related to economic changes. LD will continue to monitor applications to the Fund. If necessary, LD will arrange internal deployment and increase manpower to handle the possible rise in the number of applications. Besides, LD will review the procedures of verification of applications from time to time with a view to issuing ex gratia payment as soon as practicable.

(5) Based on the information and data gathered, the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund Board (the Board) has been conducting a review of the scope of coverage of all the payment items under the Fund. In the process, the Board has to examine with prudence all the relevant information, including the possible impact of the abolition of the arrangement for "offsetting" severance payment/long service payment with MPF contributions on the financial position of the Fund for the purpose of thoroughly considering the matter. When the result of the review is available, the Government will consult the Labour Advisory Board and report to the Panel on Manpower of the Legislative Council.

LCQ13: Road safety involving roadside trees

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

It is learnt that there have been, from time to time, incidents of vehicles damaged (e.g. cracking of the windowpanes of franchised buses) or traffic accidents, resultant from vehicles hitting roadside trees, the trunks and branches of these trees that overhung the roads or their wilted branches that fell onto the roads. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of complaints received by the authorities in each of the past five years about roadside trees posing hazards to road safety, and the

details of the follow-up actions;

(2) of the number of traffic accidents caused by vehicles hitting roadside trees or their trunks and branches that overhung the roads, and the resultant casualties, in each of the past five years;

(3) of the mechanism currently put in place to prevent roadside trees from posing hazards to road safety; the respective numbers of roadside trees that were pruned and removed by the authorities in the past three years;

(4) whether the authorities will designate a single government department to take up the task of managing roadside trees; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) how the authorities currently determine the species of the trees to be planted alongside the roads;

(6) whether, in the light of a serious traffic accident that occurred on Fanling Highway in December last year and involved a bus hitting a tree, the authorities have reviewed the road safety measures of the location concerned so as to avoid the occurrence of similar incidents; if so, of the details;

(7) as the front left compartment on the upper deck of a bus is the first to bear the brunt when the bus hits the trunks and branches of roadside trees, whether the authorities have discussed with bus companies the adoption of improvement measures to enhance the protection for passenger safety; if so, of the details;

(8) given that there is a shortage of local workers in the greening industry, of the authorities' new measures to attract new blood to the industry with a view to improving tree management work; and

(9) given that the arboriculture and horticulture industry is not regarded as a separate trade in the construction industry, and that a registration system for arboriculture and horticulture practitioners has not been set up at present, of the improvement measures put in place by the authorities to ensure the quality of tree management work?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to the proper management of tree assets to ensure healthy tree growth and with public safety as the prime consideration.

In respect of the nine-part question raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan, our reply, upon consultation with relevant departments, is as follows:

(1) In the past five years, as regards complaints about roadside trees affecting road safety, government departments received 1 937 cases in 2015, 3 840 cases in 2016, 4 672 cases in 2017, 7 513 cases in 2018 and 3 187 cases

in 2019. Upon receipt of complaints, relevant departments would take immediate follow-up actions having regard to the health, structural and growth conditions of the trees. These actions include assessing the tree risks and implementing appropriate risk mitigation measures, such as pruning, removing wilted branches, controlling pests and diseases; cordoning off dangerous trees; and removing hazardous trees that pose an imminent threat to the life and property of road users.

(2) Based on the records of the departments concerned, the numbers of traffic accidents and resultant casualties involving "vehicle crashing into trees" from 2015 to 2019 are tabulated below. These traffic accidents mainly involved driver contributory factors, including "driving inattentively" and "loss of vehicle control".

Year	Number of traffic accidents	Casualties		
		Fatal	Serious injury	Minor injury
2015	45	1	16	53
2016	53	1	12	63
2017	45	1	11	56
2018	49	1	11	58
2019	43	6	10	76

Government departments regularly send their teams to inspect trees along public roads and on expressways (including roadside vegetation) under their purview, and record whatever damages to road facilities and potential hazards. In case there are overgrown branches obstructing traffic flow, blocking sightline, blocking traffic lights or signs, or posing potential impact on vehicles, etc., the departments will immediately arrange branch pruning or tree removal as soon as practicable to keep road users safe. In addition, government departments also undertake annual inspections and risk assessments on trees under their purview, so as to carry out the necessary tree maintenance works in due course, including controlling pests and diseases, pruning and removing branches or the whole trees that pose threat to public safety.

Since pruning and removal of roadside trees are part of departments' overall tree management work, no breakdown of such work is available.

(4) As there are numerous roadside trees in Hong Kong and their geographical distribution is wide, designating a single government department to take up the task of managing all roadside trees is not the most effective way in resource deployment. The Government adopts an "integrated approach" in conserving and managing our tree assets, under which departments responsible for maintaining the government facilities or land allocated to them are responsible for taking care of the trees thereon in accordance with

the requirements and guidelines promulgated by the Development Bureau (DEVB). This approach allows departments to carry out appropriate routine tree maintenance having regard to the specific characteristics and locations of the trees.

(5) As regards the selection of roadside tree species, departments will follow the principles of "Right Tree, Right Place" and vegetation diversity advocated by DEVB, consider the site conditions and constraints (such as planting space, microclimate, underground and aboveground utilities, traffic and pedestrian flow, sightline impact, etc.), landscape design, planting purposes and functions, ecological issues, as well as the characteristics and maintenance requirements of different tree species, and make reference to the Street Tree Selection Guide issued by DEVB.

(6) After the relevant accident, the Transport Department (TD) has reviewed the design of the road section concerned, namely, Fanling Highway Sheung Shui bound near Tsung Pak Long. The road section concerned is a dual three-lane expressway with posted speed limit of 100 km/hr. Hard shoulders and barriers are provided on both sides of the road, and their design complies with the road safety standards.

(7) Following the serious bus accident last December, TD took further follow-up actions to enhance bus safety with all franchised bus operators. As requested by TD, the franchised bus operators have expedited the installation of advanced driver assistance systems (including collision avoidance and lane keeping alert systems) on their buses, with a view to having the devices installed on all franchised buses operating the airport routes and/or via expressways by Q4 2020.

In addition, TD has explored with major bus manufacturers and franchised bus operators the need, feasibility and implications on enhancing the bus structure (especially the upper deck) so as to provide additional protection for upper-deck passengers. In light of Hong Kong's special circumstances, the major bus manufacturers have embarked on impact analysis by computer simulation to further assess the strength and integrity of the existing structure of franchised buses, and explore structural enhancement measures accordingly. TD will continue to closely follow up with major bus manufacturers on possible improvement measures related to bus structure and other vehicle technology.

(8) The Financial Secretary announced in the 2019-20 Budget the setting up of a \$200 million Urban Forestry Support Fund (the Fund) to encourage youngsters to join the arboriculture and horticulture industry, uplift the professional standards of the practitioners, and strengthen public education and promotion on proper tree care. Upon funding approval by the Legislative Council, the Fund will support DEVB in rolling out various new initiatives, including introduction of the Study Sponsorship Scheme and the Trainee Programme, hosting International Urban Forestry Conferences, as well as holding many more education and promotion activities in collaboration with local groups. Among these new initiatives, the Study Sponsorship Scheme and the Trainee Programme will help address the issue of manpower shortage within the

arboriculture and horticulture industry.

(9) As announced in the Policy Address Supplement on October 16, 2019, DEVB will introduce a registration scheme for tree management personnel, with a view to enhancing the quality of the tree management personnel, the professional standards of the industry and the practices of tree management work.

In the interim, in 2019, DEVB updated the "Guidelines for Tree Risk Assessment and Management Arrangement", increased the audit percentage of risk assessment reports, and set up a dedicated Inspection Squad which aims to adopt a systematic approach to randomly check and audit the tree inspection reports completed by the tree management departments, and proactively inspect trees in areas of high pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow to ensure that departments adhere to the Guidelines. Besides, before the onset of the typhoon and rain season every year, DEVB reminds private property owners and property management personnel to undertake risk assessment on the trees within their property and implement appropriate mitigation measures in a timely manner. We also organise tree management workshops for private property management personnel from time to time to strengthen their awareness on proper tree care.

LCQ3: Resettlement arrangements for residents in residential care homes for elderly in Dills Corner Garden

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (April 22):

Question:

To take forward the Kwu Tung North New Development Area project, the Government will clear, by two phases, the 15 private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in Dills Corner Garden (DCG), and will construct on a nearby site a purpose-built multi-welfare services complex with seven contract RCHEs to rehouse the eligible residents affected by the clearance. According to the Government, as it is expected that the RCHEs concerned will not be commissioned until 2023, the Government will make transitional arrangements for the affected residents, and will establish an inter-departmental working group for maintaining close liaison with the operators of all RCHEs in DCG, in the hope that there will be "no time gap" between the clearance and resettlement. It has been reported that the first-phase clearance will commence in the second quarter of this year, affecting a total

of around 140 residents in four RCHes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific measures in place to achieve the aforesaid "no time gap" objective;

(2) of the latest progress of the transitional arrangements made for the residents affected by the first-phase clearance, including the number of transitional residential places and, among them, the respective numbers of EA1 and EA2 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme; whether it has examined if such places meet the care needs of the residents concerned; given the rampant Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic at present, whether it will examine postponing the first-phase clearance to avoid the residents being exposed to greater infection risks caused by their relocation;

(3) when it will conduct registration for the residents affected by the two phases of clearance in order to confirm their eligibility for admission to the new contract RCHes;

(4) of the number of meetings held by the aforesaid working group to date, and the date of the last meeting held; the plans of the working group on enhancing its coordination with the operators of the various RCHes in DCG; and

(5) whether it will examine awarding the contracts for operating the new RCHes through restricted tendering under which only the operators of all RCHes in DCG are invited to bid for the contracts, so as to maximise the number of affected residents who, upon moving into the new RCHes, will continue to be taken care of by the existing RCHE staff with whom they are familiar?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Development Bureau, my reply to the Member's question is as follows:

The Dills Corner Garden (DCG) will be cleared in two phases. The first phase of clearance affecting four residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) will take place in end-June 2020. The second phase affecting the remaining RCHes will tentatively be conducted in 2023. Having regard to the wish of some affected elderly residents to be accommodated in the vicinity of DCG, the Government commenced the construction of a new Multi-welfare Services Complex (the Complex) in the neighbouring Area 29 in December 2019. The Complex, which is expected to commence operation before the second phase clearance in 2023, will comprise seven contract RCHes. Five of these RCHes providing around 1 250 places (including both subsidised and non-subsidised places) will be made available to elderly residents of existing RCHes in DCG, which are sufficient to accommodate the total of around 900 existing residents.

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has arranged registration for all elderly residents of RCHEs affected by the first phase clearance on March 17, 2020. A total of 150 residents (including two residents of EA2 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS)) were confirmed to be eligible for moving into the contract RCHEs after the commissioning of the Complex.

The Government understands that residents affected by first phase clearance generally wish to continue living in DCG during the transitional period (i.e. before the commissioning of the Complex). In this connection, the Government is converting Block 3, which is not affected by first phase clearance, to provide additional residential care places. Along with the remaining vacant places in DCG, over 150 residential care places (including those under EBPS) will be available which is sufficient to accommodate all elderly residents affected by first phase clearance.

The Government will closely monitor the epidemic situation of COVID-19 and maintain close liaison with RCHE operators concerned with a view to preparing for first phase clearance in end-June 2020, including taking precautionary measures to protect the affected elderly residents.

An inter-departmental working group was set up by the Government in 2014 on the clearance of DCG. The working group convened a total of seven meetings with the operators concerned. At the 7th meeting held on October 3, 2019, the Government explained to the operators arrangements of the clearance and assistance to be provided to the affected residents. SWD staff have contacted residents affected by the first phase clearance to explain the relocation arrangements and Government's assistance multiple times. On October 23, 2019, SWD staff delivered notification letters in person to affected residents, who were subsequently provided with follow-up assistance by social workers to address their needs. On March 17, 2020, when conducting registration for the affected residents, SWD staff delivered notification letters in person and explained again the relocation arrangements. SWD has also set up an enquiry hotline since October 2019 for affected elderly residents and their families to make enquiries on clearance related matters.

Apart from the inter-departmental working group meetings, representatives of government departments have discussed multiple times with the operators on issues of their concern and the relocation arrangements for residents affected by the first phase clearance. On January 22, 2020, representatives of government departments attended a case conference with Legislative Council (LegCo) members to discuss the relocation arrangements and Government's assistance. On March 6, 2020, representatives of government departments met with the RCHE operators and LegCo members to follow up on the Government's assistance. The Government calls on all operators to work with the interests of elderly residents in mind, and secure the relocation arrangements for affected residents as soon as possible through joint efforts.

The seven contract RCHEs in the Complex are not intended for lease. In line with the established policies and with a view to ensuring the service quality of all contract RCHEs, the Government will invite service providers

to bid for service contracts of the RCHEs concerned through open tender in accordance with the "fair and impartial" principle, so as to select the tenderers that can provide the best services for the elderly residents. All eligible private organisations and non-governmental organisations, including the existing DCG operators, can participate in the open tender.

The Government will incorporate in the tender assessment specific criteria on the bidder's plan for handling and intake of elderly residents and staff of existing RCHEs in DCG, so as to ensure that appropriate arrangements will be made for the elderly residents and staff.

Departure of SCS

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, today (April 22) made the following statement on his departure:

I am honoured to have served as the Secretary for the Civil Service for nearly three years, during which I have had the chance to work with outstanding government colleagues to safeguard the core values of the civil service, and to overcome different challenges to draw up various initiatives under the civil service pay and welfare portfolios. Setting up Chinese medicine clinics for civil servants and putting a cap on the payroll cost of increments are noteworthy examples of these measures which benefited our civil servants. Meanwhile, the planning of the civil service college and the Disciplined Services Grade Structure Review are also in full swing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of the dedicated civil servants, stakeholders and those who all along have supported the civil service.

With the rising public expectations of the Government, the civil service will continue to face different challenges. As such, the new Secretary for the Civil Service has a huge and important responsibility and I hope that civil servants will fully support him in this regard.