

Government steps up efforts in handling water incidents at Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court (with photos/video)

The Government attaches great importance to the water incidents at Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court. Under the supervision of the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, relevant policy bureaux and departments have commenced work promptly to follow up on the four directives put forward by the Chief Executive after a high-level steering meeting yesterday (June 6) to implement 10 specific tasks.

The Government has set up an expert group comprising three experts from the Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee (DWSAC), namely the Chairman of the DWSAC, Dr Chan Hon-fai, Mr Chung Chi-ming, and Mr Chan Chi-ming. The expert group will continue to advise on the traceability work of the incident and ensure the investigation results are scientific and objective.

The Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, together with the Director of Water Supplies, Mr Roger Wong, and the three members of the expert group, visited the upstream location of the water supply network for Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court today (June 7) to inspect the screen filter and learn about the upcoming work at the location of the pipe. The Government briefed the expert group on the assessment that the section of steel pipe with bitumen protective coating on the inner wall at the upstream water supply network at Ping Che Road, which is about 400-metre-long and 600 millimetres in diameter, is believed to be the source of sediments in the water at Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court. The expert group considered the assessment reasonable.

The WSD will continue to deepen the traceability work, using advanced technologies, such as robots, to detect the condition of the bitumen coating inside the pipe, so as to further ascertain the specific cause of the incident. An investigation report of the incident will be submitted to the DWSAC for review within two weeks.

Ms Linn said that the WSD will first replace a section of 400-metre-long steel water pipe with bitumen protective coating on the inner wall at the upstream and the works will commence within this year. The WSD will immediately start the preparation work. At present, non-bitumen protective coating is used on the inner wall of over 90 per cent of water pipes in Hong Kong. For the 700-kilometre-long water pipes with bitumen protective coating on the inner wall, the WSD has installed over 1 000 screen filters at suitable locations, and will review, in accordance with the risk-based approach, whether it is necessary to install extra screen filters at other locations. The WSD will formulate a longer-term plan for the replacement of

water pipes and will submit a proposal to the Development Bureau for review.

While stepping up the traceability work, the WSD has increased the frequency of water testing. Water samples are collected daily from water tanks at Queen's Hill Estate (comprising seven buildings, a community centre and a shopping mall) and Shan Lai Court (six buildings) for testing to closely monitor water quality. The testing results are released on the WSD's website daily. To ensure residents can feel at ease when consuming water, the WSD will continue to arrange water tanks for the estates to provide temporary water supply. The WSD will also promptly address any inquiries received (the WSD's 24-hour hotline: 2824 5000). The District Officer will strengthen communication with the WSD and the Housing Department (HD) and will immediately follow up on any complaints from residents.

Prompt arrangement has been made by the HD to thoroughly clean again the water tanks in every building of Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court within the next seven days. The HD installed a total of 22 high-efficiency filtration devices at the ground-level water inlets of all 13 buildings in Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court. These devices will be inspected twice daily to ensure proper operation. The expenses for these measures will be fully borne by the Government.

The HD will display the WSD's daily water test results in the lobby of each building in Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court, with daily updating. If residents observe any issues with water quality, they can call the Queen's Hill Estate management office (Tel: 2537 0001) or the Shan Lai Court management office (Tel: 2713 9530) and provide their contact information. The management office will follow up by contacting residents and conducting on-site inspections.

The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD), together with District Council (DC) members and volunteers from Care Teams (CT), have conducted over 100 visits and gathered cases for referral over the past week, demonstrating through concrete actions their care for the residents of Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court over the drinking water incident and its impact on their daily lives.

The HYAB and the HAD will gather over 50 persons comprising DC members, members of the "three district committees" of the North District, and the six sub-teams of the North District CTs, along with staff members of the HD, to conduct home visits today and tomorrow. The visits will include following up with households previously sought assistance in relation to the incident on their current water usage conditions, and making immediate referrals where necessary. The team reached over 850 households during today's visit; the majority of these households acknowledged water quality has substantially improved. Additionally, three street booths will be set up at key locations in Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court to provide residents with the latest updates and practical information, as well as to register residents' cases for assistance.

