

LCQ1: Improving environment of Tsuen Wan waterfront

Following is a question by the Hon Nixie Lam and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 18):

Question:

While Phase 1 of the "Enhancement of the Tsuen Wan Waterfront project" ("the enhancement project"), implemented by the Government through the dedicated funding for harbourfront enhancement, was completed and opened to the public in April last year, the details of the project's Phase 2 are not yet available. On the other hand, the seawater odour problem at the Tsuen Wan waterfront, which has been causing distress to the residents of Tsuen Wan West, remains unresolved. On improving the environment of the Tsuen Wan waterfront, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that the Harbourfront Commission once put forward proposals for improving the Tsuen Wan waterfront, including the provision of jogging trails, greening and covered leisure facilities, whether the Government has incorporated such proposals in its plans for the enhancement project in future; if so, of the details and the latest progress; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the latest schedules for the works projects for resolving the seawater odour problem at the above location; whether it will consider concurrently adopting the method of using oyster shells for purification of the seawater to help resolve the problem; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that the discharge of polluted water into the stormwater drainage system of the Tsuen Wan District is the cause of the seawater odour problem at the Tsuen Wan waterfront, whether the Government will establish comprehensive big data on sewage discharge in order to eradicate the problem by nipping the problem in the bud; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

First of all, I would like to thank the Hon Nixie Lam for her question and concern about the Tsuen Wan waterfront and near-shore odour problem. On April 28, the Environment Bureau, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the Drainage Services Department (DSD) conducted a site visit with the representatives of residents of Tsuen Wan Bay to explain the details of the Government's various odour mitigation measures and projects, and received their positive feedback. My reply to the Hon Lam's question is as follows:

(1) The Government has been striving to enhance the Victoria Harbour waterfronts, and has dedicated \$6.5 billion funding to develop new promenades and open space, as well as to enhance the harbourfront. Among various projects, the Enhancement of the Tsuen Wan Waterfront (Phase 1) was completed in April last year and has been opened to the public. The Development Bureau is currently taking forward the project for Enhancement of the Tsuen Wan Waterfront (Phase 2) (the Project), which aims to enhance the waterfront facilities and design and improve the connectivity of the waterfront from surrounding areas. The Project comprises a 530-metre long promenade for the public to jog and stroll, and a waterfront space project covering an area of about 12 000 square metres. The project will provide a variety of leisure facilities, including fitness and recreational facilities, restaurants, shelters and green zones. The facilities would blend in the landscape design for public to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the Tsuen Wan waterfront space in different ways.

The Architectural Services Department is currently conducting consultant selection process for the detailed design for the Project. The selection process is expected to be completed by the middle of this year. We plan to conduct consultation work, including consultation with the Harbourfront Commission and the district on the detailed design once it is ready. We target to invite tenders for the construction works by the end of 2023 and aim to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council and commence construction works in mid-2024. The Project is expected to be completed in phases from the end of 2025, bringing a new experience to the public at the Tsuen Wan waterfront.

(2) Similar to many developed areas in Hong Kong, Tsuen Wan is a densely populated district packed with new and old buildings and vibrant city activities. This results in some polluted surface run-off draining into the near-shore waters via the stormwater drainage system and causes the emanation of odour. To resolve the odour problem at the Tsuen Wan waterfront area, the Government has formulated a series of improvement plans, including the following:

- To enhance clean-up of refuse black spots in the district and conduct regular dredging of drainage channels so as to reduce the discharge of pollutants or sediment into the near-shore waters through stormwater drains;
- To deploy large curtains and apply "odour-control hydrogel" at the outlets of box drains along the coast so as to inhibit odorous gas emission;
- To investigate and rectify foul sewer misconnections to the stormwater drainage system so as to segregate sewage and stormwater flows and prevent sewage pollution in the coastal area; and
- To carry out multiple items of projects on pollutant interception, sewerage system and sewer rehabilitation in the district so as to reduce near-shore pollution discharge, with details as follows:

Advance works on pollution source interception

The Government is constructing dry weather flow interceptors (DWFI) at five unsewered rural areas of Tsuen Wan, including Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen, San Tsuen (Northeast), Fu Yung Shan, Hon Man Squatter Area and Sam Tung Uk, to intercept sewage and prevent it from draining into Tsuen Wan Bay. The works is expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Village sewerage systems

In order to increase the amount of sewage interception, the Government is planning village sewerage systems for nine unsewered villages in Tsuen Wan. We will submit a funding application to the Legislative Council for the concerned works in Lo Wai and Chuen Lung in June this year, targeting for completion in 2025. We will progressively initiate gazettal and land resumption procedures for the respective works in the remaining seven villages.

Sewer rehabilitation

In addition, the DSD is conducting condition survey for about seven kilometers and rehabilitating about 1.3 kilometres of sewers and the associated manholes in Tsuen Wan. The works are targeted for completion in stages between 2022 and 2025.

Newly designed DWFI

For long-term improvement of the water quality at Tsuen Wan waterfront, the Government is planning to construct newly designed DWFI near the outlets of the Tai Ho Road and Ma Tau Pa Road box culverts to intercept residual pollutants carried by them. The project had been included in the public works programme in 2020, and the work on site investigation and finalisation of site selection is now in full swing. We will conduct district consultation on the proposed works within 2022. After completion of the relevant procedures and funding approval by the Legislative Council, we will commence construction works as soon as possible in 2024. The facility is targeted for completion in 2028.

To conclude, the odour problem at the Tsuen Wan waterfront is mainly caused by sewage or pollutants being discharged into the bay area through stormwater drains, and the primary solution is to intercept the pollution. Although deployment of oyster shells for building ecological seawalls or artificial oyster reefs in near-shore area can enrich biodiversity and enhance the ecological environment, it has limited effect on treating sewage and pollutants from storm drains. Therefore, the Government will focus resources to implement the above-mentioned pollution interception, sewerage and sewer rehabilitation works in Tsuen Wan.

(3) Apart from the aforementioned unsewered rural areas, some sewer misconnections in the Tsuen Wan urban area are also sources of sewage in the stormwater drainage system. In this regard, the EPD has been proactively

tracing pollution sources and identifying pollution caused by misconnections in Tsuen Wan with an aim to controlling and intercepting pollutants from entering the stormwater system at source. In parallel, we will continue to collect and collate information and data of pollution sources, and make timely update, with a view to systematically following up on the progress of misconnection correction work.

Thank you, President.