

LCQ15: Development plans for three squatter areas in Kowloon East

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

It is learnt that there are three squatter areas in Kowloon East (i.e. Chuk Yuen United Village, Ngau Chi Wan Village and Cha Kwo Ling Village) which are yet to be redeveloped. Chuk Yuen United Village and Ngau Chi Wan Village have been zoned "Government, Institution or Community" sites but without any concrete development plans, while Cha Kwo Ling Village is within an "Undetermined" zone. Regarding the development plans for these three squatter areas, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective current numbers of (i) surveyed and (ii) non-surveyed squatter structures in (a) Chuk Yuen United Village, (b) Ngau Chi Wan Village and (c) Cha Kwo Ling Village;

(2) given that the Government has earmarked a piece of land in Ngau Chi Wan Village for the construction of a community hall but has not put forward any implementation plan for years, whether there has been any change in the planned use of the land concerned; if so, of the latest planned use and the development timetable; if not, the timetable and details for the construction of the community hall;

(3) whether the Government will, in the coming three years, conduct detailed planning for the three squatter areas; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it will conduct re-planning for the three squatter areas in order to release more lands for public housing development; if so, of the details as well as the estimated number and floor area of public housing units that can be provided; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to adopting a multi-pronged land supply strategy with a view to meeting the land demand for different uses at different time. With regard to squatter areas, the Government will, taking into account factors such as development plan of the squatter area (if any), environmental improvement or safety reasons, clear and demolish the squatters to release the land for alternative long-term development uses.

My reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Under the prevailing squatter control policy, squatter structures surveyed during the 1982 Squatter Control Survey (SCS) were allocated squatter survey numbers, but they remain unauthorised in nature. They are "tolerated" on a temporary basis, provided that the location, dimensions, building materials and use are the same as the record in the 1982 SCS, until the surveyed squatter structure has to be cleared for development, environmental improvement or safety reasons, or until the surveyed squatter structure is phased out through natural wastage.

At present, the numbers of surveyed squatter structures in Chuk Yuen United Village, Ngau Chi Wan Village and Cha Kwo Ling Village are around 49, 266 and 475 respectively. The number of surveyed squatter structures is based on the records of the 1982 SCS and adjusted due to deletion of SCS records after 1982 for various known reasons (e.g. enforcement against breaches of squatter control or squatters found non-existent).

The Lands Department does not keep separate statistics on the number of squatter structures not covered in the 1982 SCS records. Appropriate squatter control actions will be taken against unauthorised structures, which are not "tolerated" on a temporary basis, once they are identified.

(2) The site reserved for the development of a community hall within Ngau Chi Wan Village is zoned "Government, Institution or Community" (G/IC) on the Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K12/16. At present, we have no plan to change the reserved use of this site. The Home Affairs Department will carry out the necessary planning work of a new community hall in a timely manner in liaison with relevant departments, taking into account the overall planning of Ngau Chi Wan area (including Ngau Chi Wan Village), development progress and population.

(3) and (4) We agree that redevelopment of squatter areas in urban area may release precious urban sites for addressing the shortage of developable land. With regard to the three squatter areas as mentioned in the question, we plan to first commence a study on the long-term use of Cha Kwo Ling Village and its development scale in mid-2019, and will gradually review the long-term development of Chuk Yuen United Village and Ngau Chi Wan Village in a timely manner. The long-term land uses, potential floor area and flat yield of these sites will be ascertained after completion of relevant studies.