

LCQ15: Taking forward public housing projects

Following is a question by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

On taking forward public housing projects, will the Government inform this Council:

1. of the number of housing projects in each of the past five financial years which could not be completed in the year concerned as originally planned, and set out, by project name in a table, (i) the number of residential units, (ii) the causes for the delay, and (iii) the number of days of delay in respect of the various projects;
2. whether it has set up a mechanism for reviewing the causes for the delay in housing projects and for formulating improvement measures; if it has set up such a mechanism, whether it has reviewed its effectiveness; if it has not set up such a mechanism, whether it will do so expeditiously;
3. whether it will consider publishing annually the information about the housing projects under construction which have experienced delay, including the name of projects and the causes for the delay, as well as giving an account of the impact of such delays on the supply of public housing; if so, of the details; and
4. of the specific measures in place to ensure that housing projects will be completed on schedule?

Reply:

President,

Our consolidated reply to the Hon Kwok Wai-keung's question is as follows:

According to the Long Term Housing Strategy, the Government updates the long term housing demand projection annually and presents a rolling ten-year housing supply target. This annual updating exercise enables the Government to continually plan ahead the development of land and housing, in order to meet the housing needs of the community over the long term. The Government also takes forward public housing development projects through a five-year public housing construction programme, which rolls forward on a yearly basis.

Although the forecast of flat production in the five-year public housing construction programme is subject to adjustments due to various factors (such

as design enhancement, progress of individual projects, etc.), the Government and relevant organisations, including the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), have been attaching great importance to the progress of public housing construction and have put in place stringent monitoring mechanism. Based on the mechanism, the Housing Department monitors the progress of each project closely through regular reviews. Monthly progress reports are submitted to the Building Committee of HA, which discusses and monitors the progress and gives suggestions on project enhancement. In terms of information publication, we will upload the five-year public housing production forecast onto the websites of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) and relevant organisations (including HA and the Hong Kong Housing Society) on a quarterly basis for public perusal. THB reports the five-year public housing construction programme to the Panel on Housing of the Legislative Council (the Panel) on an annual basis. The relevant papers are available on the Legislative Council's website. The Government and relevant organisations will actively consider providing information on projects that were unable to be completed as scheduled compared to the previous year at the future annual reports to the Panel.

According to past records, major reasons for public housing projects not completed as scheduled include inclement weather, progress of contractor, labour supply of the construction industry, external factors and compliance with the latest buildings requirements, etc. To mitigate project delay, measures such as requesting constructors to increase manpower and expedite construction progress; conducting site checks more frequently; convening site meetings; carrying out site supervision and inspection, etc., are performed. These measures help address the challenges encountered at on-site construction works, with a view to facilitating the early completion of the projects according to the schedule.

Regarding the Hon Kwok's enquiry on the individual information of public housing projects that were unable to be completed as scheduled in the past five years, including project name, number of residential units involved, etc., since compilation of such data involves reviewing a substantial number of files, we will review these files and provide written supplementary information to Members as soon as possible after the termination of the prevailing special work arrangements of the Government in response to the COVID-19 virus.