

LCQ16: Reduction in leasing of private premises for government office accommodation

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (June 4):

Question:

It is learnt that with the successive completion of various new government buildings, the Government Property Agency has indicated that it will reduce the leasing of private premises for office accommodation in order to save public money. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of private premises currently leased by various bureaux and government departments for office accommodation, and the rental ranges of these premises, together with a breakdown by the 18 districts across the territory;

(2) whether the authorities have formulated plans to relocate from the private premises mentioned in (1); if so, of the details (including the relocation dates and the addresses of the new offices); if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) given that the 2017 Policy Address proposed the redevelopment of the three government buildings on the Wan Chai waterfront, and that according to the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 69, the authorities are required to construct nine replacement buildings for 28 bureaux and departments, as well as the Judiciary, of the specific progress to date of the relocation plan (including how many government departments have yet to move out), and the expected timeframe for completing the entire relocation plan?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Government Property Agency (GPA), our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Lau is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Government's policy is to accommodate offices in government-owned premises as far as possible. Leasing private premises for use by departments will only be considered if government-owned premises are unable to meet their locational requirements or operational needs. GPA conducts an accommodation review annually. To reduce rental expenses, GPA will relocate leased offices to government-owned premises, as well as relocate leased

offices with higher rent to private premises with lower rent, having regard to the departments' operational needs and cost-effectiveness.

Information on private premises leased by government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) for use as government offices is set out at Annex. In 2025-26, the Government plans to relocate 26 leased offices to government-owned premises or private premises with lower rent, and is expected to save approximately \$130 million annually in rental expenses (including management fees and air-conditioning charges). To avoid affecting negotiations with private property owners, we are unable to provide details of the relocation plans.

GPA will continue to review rental levels and explore ways to control rental expenses with B/Ds, including relocating offices to suitable government-owned premises or private premises with lower rent as far as possible.

(3) The Government plans to relocate the three government buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront and construct nine buildings in other areas to relocate those existing government offices. The latest progress is as follows:

(a) The West Kowloon Government Offices in Yau Ma Tei, the Government Data Centre Complex and the Treasury Building in Cheung Sha Wan, the Inland Revenue Centre in Kai Tak, and the Immigration Headquarters in Tseung Kwan O have been completed and are in operation;

(b) The Tseung Kwan O Government Offices will soon be completed and are expected to commence operation progressively from the second half of this year; and

(c) As for the remaining three reprovisioning projects, namely the Drainage Services Tower in Cheung Sha Wan, the Water Supplies Department Building and Correctional Services Headquarters Building in Chai Wan, and the District Court Building in Causeway Bay respectively, the Government aims to complete the relevant construction works by 2026.