

LCQ4: Impacts of tourist coaches on To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom districts

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

Some residents of To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom districts have relayed that tourist coaches often bring a large number of Mainland inbound tour groups to the districts for dining and shopping, but parking spaces in the districts are in short supply and the roads therein are narrow. The illegal pick-up/drop-off of passengers by and parking of tourist coaches have from time to time caused traffic obstructions and accidents (e.g. a pedestrian was knocked down and killed last month), thereby impacting gravely on the daily lives and safety of the residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of complaints received from residents of To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom districts about the traffic obstructions in the districts caused by tourist coaches, the number of the relevant law enforcement operations conducted, and the number of fixed penalty notices issued for traffic contraventions involving tourist coaches, by the Police in each month of the past three years;

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the traffic flows of tourist coaches and the black spots of their illegal parking in the two districts to facilitate transport planning and law enforcement; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will compile such statistics immediately; and

(3) whether it has plans to make use of smart systems to assist in law enforcement against illegal parking in the two districts and to extend the prohibition area for tourist coaches, with a view to reducing the impact on residents' daily lives?

Reply:

President,

The Government is gravely concerned about tourist coaches illegally parked or picking up/setting down passengers at tourist hotspots. In this regard, the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (Police) have been closely monitoring the traffic conditions around the tourist hotspots in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom, and taking forward a number of targeted measures to strengthen the management of the flow of tourist coaches and enhance road safety.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Chan Hoi-yan's question is as

follows:

(1) In the past two years, i.e. May 2017 to April 2019, the Police received a total of 2,477 traffic complaints about tourist coaches and issued a total of 4,192 fixed penalty notices to tourist coaches relating to traffic contraventions in the Kowloon City Police District including To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom districts. The relevant monthly figures are set out in the Annex. The Police have not kept any relevant figures before May 2017. As regards enforcement action, the Kowloon City Police District deploys staff to carry out crowd management and traffic enforcement actions at tourist hotspots on a daily basis.

(2) In order to formulate responsive traffic management measures targeting at the operation of tourist coaches in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom, the TD conducts traffic statistics field work at selected road sections in the two above-mentioned districts from time to time to collect data relating to tourist coaches, including their usage of on-street picking up/setting down facilities and temporary car parks in the districts, which will serve as reference for planning the traffic management measures related to tourist coaches.

The tourist hotspots in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom, including areas in the vicinity of To Kwa Wan Road, San Ma Tau Street and Mei King Street, areas around Chi Kiang Street, Sung On Street and Bailey Street, as well as areas near Sze Chuen Street, have been listed by the Police as priority locations for actions against illegal parking. Appropriate enforcement actions are taken in respect of the illegal parking situation of tourist coaches.

(3) The TD has been identifying suitable locations in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom for providing additional on-street pick-up/set-down points and parking spaces for use by tourist coaches where road safety is not compromised and traffic conditions permit, as well as facilitating the granting of short-term tenancy (STT) car parks for parking of tourist coaches. Currently, the TD provides a total of 96 on-street metered parking spaces and 110 lay-bys for pick-up or set-down purposes in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom. Besides, there are 73 parking spaces in STT car parks for use by tourist coaches. The TD has also designated "No-stopping Restriction Zones" in suitable road sections in the districts, which limit the pick-up and set-down activities of coaches in restricted hours, so as to maintain smooth traffic flow. The Government has also offered a discounted fee of \$6 per half an hour between 9am and 8pm in the temporary car park at the junction of Bailey Street and Sung Ping Street with a view to encouraging parking of tourist coaches there.

To further strengthen the management of the flow of tourist coaches and enhance road safety, the Government plans to establish additional designated passenger pick-up/set-down areas for tourist coaches in the districts. Consideration is being given to using the temporary car park at the junction of Bailey Street and Sung Ping Street as a pick-up/set-down area; providing ten additional on-street metered tourist coach parking spaces at the junction of Hung Hom Road and Bailey Street; and providing four additional lay-bys at appropriate sections of Chi Kiang Street. To dovetail with these measures, the Government plans to expand the "No-stopping Restriction Zone" for coaches

at appropriate road sections on the periphery of tourist hotspots within the districts so as to restrict the pick-up/set-down areas for tourist coaches on public roads, thereby encouraging tourist coaches to use the designated pick-up/set-down areas mentioned above.

As regards traffic enforcement, the Police have been closely monitoring the situation of illegal parking or picking up/setting down passengers by tourist coaches in the above-mentioned districts, and taking stern enforcement actions against those which have caused serious obstruction to traffic and posed a safety risk. Starting from January 2019, the Kowloon City Police District has been implementing special traffic control measures around Chi Kiang Street, Sung On Street and Bailey Street, as well as around To Kwa Wan Road, San Ma Tau Street and Mei King Street during daily peak periods of tourist coach movements. Under the control measures, tourist coach drivers have to follow the instructions of the police officers on the spot and drive to designated locations for picking up and setting down passengers.

Besides, the Police have started to take enforcement actions by means of mobile video recording at tourist hotspots in To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom. They use hand-held video cameras to record instances of traffic contravention on an irregular basis in order to combat obstruction to traffic flow and strengthen the deterrent effect. The Police also plan to launch a pilot scheme on Electronic Fixed Penalty Notices within 2019/20 at the above-mentioned tourist hotspots. The frontline law enforcement officers will then be able to access data on vehicles parked illegally via their mobile smart devices and print out fixed penalty notices without delay, thereby enhancing efficiency in enforcement.

As regards the recent traffic accident involving a tourist coach, the Police are conducting relevant investigation. In parallel, the TD is reviewing the conditions of the road section concerned and planning a series of follow-up measures to prohibit tourist coaches from entering some of the inner streets, as well as prompting the tourist trade to shift the tourist coaches to the main roads. In this regard, the TD is drawing up a detailed proposal for trial and will conduct district consultation in due course.