

LCQ20: Epidemic-related expenditure of Hospital Authority

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council of the amount of additional funding provided, from January 23, 2020 when the first confirmed case of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 appeared in Hong Kong to February 28, 2022, by the Government to the Hospital Authority to assist it in coping with the epidemic, with a breakdown of the use of such funding by expenditure items (e.g. employment of healthcare personnel, provision of allowances to healthcare personnel, procurement of drugs, purchase of medical devices and equipment)?

Reply:

President,

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Hong Kong in 2019-20, the Government has provided additional resources to support the Hospital Authority (HA) in combatting the COVID-19 epidemic. These include:

- (a) \$4.7 billion from the Anti-epidemic Fund allocated in February 2020 to provide additional resources for the HA in tackling the COVID-19 epidemic, in particular for ensuring sufficient support and protection for frontline healthcare staff;
- (b) an additional funding of \$3.044 billion allocated to the HA in September 2020 to strengthen its service capacity in combatting the fourth wave of epidemic;
- (c) an additional subvention of \$7.5 billion allocated to the HA in 2022-23 for enhancing its capacity in combatting the new wave of COVID-19 epidemic and sustaining anti-epidemic measures; and
- (d) \$1.141 billion provided to the HA in view of its continued support on various fronts, including the operation of the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre (HKICC), COVID 19 Vaccination Programme, Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance (ELS) programme at General Outpatient Clinics (GOPCs), etc.

The HA has been flexibly deploying the funding for carrying out various anti-epidemic initiatives, which include:

- (a) personnel-related expenditure for frontline staff involved in anti-

epidemic efforts, including the provision of special allowances (e.g. Special Allowance for Designated Settings), extending and enhancing rates under the Special Honorarium Scheme, and recruiting more temporary and agency staff;

(b) establishment and operation of the HKICC and other isolation and treatment facilities, including the Treatment Centre for COVID-19 at AsiaWorld-Expo, the Community Isolation Facility at Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre, etc.;

(c) procuring additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and other necessary accessories for healthcare staff;

(d) enhancing support for laboratory testing and procuring drugs and medical equipment;

(e) enhancing hospital support services and supplies, etc.;

(f) widening ELS programme for COVID-19 at GOPCs;

(g) supporting the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme; and

(h) procuring rapid antigen test kits for patients and HA staff, etc.

As at February 28, 2022, the HA has incurred around \$8.565 billion for implementing various anti-epidemic measures, among which about \$3.1 billion is for manpower related expenditure; about \$1.3 billion for expenditure regarding establishment and operation of extra isolation and treatment facilities (excluding manpower related expenditure); and about \$4.2 billion for remaining expenditure items (including support for testing, vaccination, procurement of drugs and medical equipment, PPE and other equipment, etc.).

Money service operator convicted of operating without licence

A male shop owner and a female shopkeeper of a money exchange shop were convicted of operating a money service without a valid licence at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (May 4). Each of them was fined \$2,000.

Acting on information, Customs officers conducted an investigation in April last year and discovered a male shop owner and a female shopkeeper had been operating remittance business at a money exchange shop in To Kwa Wan after the money service operator licence had expired. Therefore, they were suspected of operating a money service without a licence.

Under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance, a person who wishes to operate a remittance and/or money changing service is required to apply for a licence from the Customs and Excise

Department. Any person who operates a money service without a valid licence commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Customs reminds consumers to procure services from licensed money service operators. The register of licensees is accessible from the website of Customs' Money Service Operators Licensing System at eservices.customs.gov.hk/MSOS/wsrh/001s1?request_locale=en.

Members of the public may report any suspected unlicensed money service operation to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

[EAC Chairman chairs first meeting of Crisis Management Committee](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Chairman of the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC), Mr Justice Barnabas Fung Wah, chaired the first meeting of the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) this afternoon (May 4). The EAC is working with different bureaux and departments in preparation for the 2022 Chief Executive (CE) Election, drawing up security and crisis management plans to deal with different circumstances that may arise during the election to be held on May 8 (Sunday).

Mr Justice Fung said in the meeting, "Given the epidemic situation and to reduce the flow of people at the main polling station, the polling hours will be extended to two and a half hours, which are from 9am to 11.30am. A suggested time slot has been assigned to the Election Committee (EC) members, according to the five EC sectors to which they belong, to vote at the main polling station. The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) has delivered to each EC member a polling notice and other electoral documents (including the Introduction to the Candidate and the location map of the main polling station). The mail also included an EC member name badge."

An EC member name badge carries the EC member's name and photo, and his or her exclusive QR code for identification. Every name badge also has a laser sticker affixed to prevent counterfeiting. The EC members should bring along the name badge to enter the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC). Every entrant (including the EC members) to the HKCEC has to go through a simple security check.

In addition, in light of COVID-19, the REO will implement a number of anti-epidemic measures in the polling and counting stations, including a

fever detection system installed at multiple entrances of the HKCEC, where the main polling station is located, to conduct temperature checks on those who arrive at the main polling station. EC members with a fever will be directed by polling staff to special voting compartments to vote.

Mr Justice Fung pointed out that the CMC will assist the EAC to closely monitor the situation on the polling day and will handle situations in which the election is affected by different incidents. During the meeting, the EAC was briefed by representatives from the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and relevant government departments, including the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Police Force, on the assessment of different situations and deployment planned for the polling day. The REO, the Home Affairs Department, the Information Services Department, the Department of Justice, the Food and Health Bureau and the Department of Health also briefed the meeting on the preparatory and co-ordination work regarding the election.

The EAC thanked all the bureaux and departments for their efforts in the preparations and arrangements for the election, and said that today's meeting helped it to get better prepared and formulate contingency plans for the CE Election to be held on May 8.

The CMC is part of the contingency mechanism for public elections. The CMC advises the EAC on matters that may affect the proceedings of the elections, such as inclement weather and issues of public health and safety. The Committee is chaired by the EAC Chairman, and comprises all EAC members, the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (or his representative) and representatives of relevant bureaux/departments.

[LCQ8: Taking forward harbourfront development](#)

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

In the 2017 Policy Address and the Budget for the 2019-2020 financial year, the Government has earmarked a total of \$6.5 billion for taking forward harbourfront development. It has also stated in the 2021 Policy Address that it will continue to implement the open management mode of "Harbourfront Shared Space" in more harbourfront sites for the public to freely enjoy the harbourfront space in an inclusive environment. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in respect of the development projects of

the harbourfront along the coast of Victoria Harbour which are completed, under construction and pending funding approval by this Council (set out by project name): the area of land involved, length of harbourfront promenade, year of completion/estimated year of completion, cost/estimated cost, as well as the design adopted (such as removable fences, low kerbs with sloping seawalls, fence-free breakwaters, and stepped-down water edges);

(2) whether the \$6.5 billion earmarked by the Government will be used, among others, to take forward improvement works for existing harbourfronts in such a way that those sites with traditional management mode/non-water-friendly design will be changed into open management mode/water-friendly design; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the "Consultancy Study on Enhancing Visitors' Experience and Connectivity from the Hinterland to and within Harbourfront Areas" and the "Consultancy Study on Design Guidelines for Promenades and Measures for Better Water-land Interface" have been completed; if so, of the outcomes and implementation timetables; if not, their latest progress and whether preliminary recommendations have been made?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Priscilla Leung is as follows:

With the support of the Harbourfront Commission (HC), the Government has been actively taking forward various projects with the \$6.5 billion harbourfront enhancement dedicated funding. Details of the relevant projects are as follows:

(a) Open Space at Eastern Street North, Sai Ying Pun (area: 1.32 hectare): the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) has approved the funding of \$207.6 million for this project. Construction works are expected to be completed by phases starting from 2024;

(b) Promenade from Central and Western District Promenade (Central Section) to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (area: 1.4 ha; new promenade added through recent project: 560 metres): project concluded and site opened in full in April 2021;

(c) Celebration Precinct in Wan Chai North (area: 1.85 ha): the site is already opened. We will continue to invite professional inputs from local creative talent in further enhancing the attractiveness of the Precinct as necessary;

(d) Pierside Precinct in Wan Chai North (area: 4.04 ha; new promenade added through recent projects: 412 m): the site has been opened by phases under the incremental approach – promenade between Expo Drive East and Marsh Road was connected in December 2020 and opened; promenade on both sides of the Wan

Chai Ferry Pier and the "HarbourChill" behind the Pier were opened in March 2021;

(e) Water Sports and Recreation Precinct in Wan Chai North (area: 1.39 ha; new promenade added through recent projects: 550 m; new promenade to be added: 220 m): promenade between Wan Chai North Temporary Public Transport Interchange and Hung Hing Road Flyover, which adopts a removable fence design, was connected in December 2020 and opened, with new sections (including a set of harbour steps, i.e. a fence-free stepped-down water edge design) opened in December 2021. In future, more parts will be released from major infrastructural works and beautified for opening by phases between late 2022 and early 2023. The water sports sector has started organising water sports events at the Precinct since the latter half of 2020;

(f) Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct in Causeway Bay (area: 2.53 ha; new promenade to be added: 317 m): the promenade near Victoria Park Road is being enhanced. A new set of harbour steps will also be introduced for bringing people closer to the water. These are expected to be opened by the latter half of 2022;

(g) East Coast Park Precinct in Fortress Hill (area: 4.7 ha; new promenade added through recent project: 360 m; new promenade to be added: 412 m): area to the west of Watson Road (including a fence-free breakwater) was opened in September 2021. Area to the west of Hing Fat Street will be released from major infrastructural works and beautified by the latter half of 2022;

(h) Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor (new promenade to be added: 1 800 m): the LegCo FC approved a funding of \$1.68 billion in October 2021. Construction works commenced in December 2021 and are expected to be completed by phases from 2024 to end 2025;

(i) Tsuen Wan Waterfront Enhancement (area: 2.05 ha): under the incremental approach, the promenade along Hoi On Road (Phase 1 project, which included the introduction of a low kerb design to the sloping sea wall) was completed and opened by phases in September 2019 and April 2021 respectively. As regards the portion from Hoi On Road to Hoi Hing Road (Phase 2 Project), tender assessment for appointment of consultant is underway;

(j) Kai Tak Metro Park (area: 12.8 ha; new promenade to be added: 583 m): although a majority of the site is still needed as works area until 2024-2025, efforts have been made to minimise the works area and shorten the occupation period so that individual land parcels could be released for beautification and subsequent opening to the public as soon as possible. With such efforts, it is expected that certain parts of the project area designated as Dining Cove and the promenade-cum-open space near the Kai Tak Approach Channel could complete construction and be opened by phases starting 2023. Additional efforts have also been made to reinstate the promenade fronting the To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter to be released by the Central Kowloon Route project. It is expected to open by phases starting late 2023;

(k) Cha Kwo Ling Waterfront (area: 4.5 ha; new promenade to be added: 1 043 m): this promenade project will be taken forward together with the adjacent campus project of the Vocational Training Council. A consultant is being engaged for devising a detailed design for the promenade. On the other hand, the waterfront area to be released from the original Kwun Tong Sewage Pumping Station nearby will be beautified under the incremental approach for its opening in 2023;

(l) Hung Hom Urban Park (area: 2.2 ha): the site has been opened for public use upon relocation of the public transport interchange thereon in January 2019. Design options are being explored for further enhancing public experience on the site, which will take into account comments received during the Market Sounding Exercise conducted earlier, operational experience upon the opening of the site, as well as the progress of projects being pursued in the vicinity (including the "Open Space Development at Hung Hom Waterfront" project by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the beautification of the Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier); and

(m) Consultancy studies on Enhancing Visitors' Experience and Connectivity from the Hinterland to and within Harbourfront Areas, and Design Guidelines for Promenades and Measures for Better Water-land Interface: upon completion of two inception reports and literature review on overseas projects, the consultants have begun the public engagement exercise and on-site survey. Findings are expected in 2022-2023.

The \$6.5 billion dedicated funding has already been earmarked for the relevant projects above, with about \$2.1 billion approved by the LegCo and/or relevant authorities. We will seek approval for deploying the remaining sum according to the established mechanism as appropriate, including seeking funding approval from the LegCo FC for individual works projects or through the block allocation mechanism under the Capital Works Reserve Fund.

Apart from developing new harbourfront promenades and open spaces, the dedicated funding of \$6.5 billion has also been used for improving existing harbourfront facilities. Taking the Tsuen Wan Waterfront Enhancement Project (see item (i) above) as an example, the first phase of the project is mainly improvement works for the existing waterfront. Planters previously separating the water's edge and the walkway have been removed, while a low kerb design has been introduced to the 370-metre section with a sloping sea wall. Such a design has not only brought visitors closer to the water, but also provided ample seating and greater lines of sight for appreciating the stunning scenery of the Rambler Channel and Tsing Yi Island.

While striving to extend the harbourfront promenades, we are also experimenting with the "vision-driven" management model at "Harbourfront Shared Space" (HSS), with a view to allowing the public to unleash their creativity and enjoy the harbourfront spaces in their own ways harmoniously with mutual respect. Among the abovementioned projects under the \$6.5 billion dedicated funding, the HSS is being tested out in (d), (e), (g) and (i). The Development Bureau and the HC will continue to extend the implementation of this open management mode to suitable harbourfront projects and introduce

improvements with reference to such experience, thereby building a more attractive and vibrant harbourfront for the public.

LCQ2: Implementation of public housing development projects

Following is a question by the Hon Stephen Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

Question:

Regarding the implementation of public housing development projects (projects), will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following information on those projects for which the Government commenced feasibility studies in each of the past four financial years and the current financial year: project location, estimated number of units to be supplied, and findings of the study (i.e. whether implementation of the project was recommended and the reasons for that) or the expected completion date for the study (set out in a table);
- (2) of the following information on those projects for which the Government commenced site investigation and design work in each of the past four financial years and the current financial year: project location, estimated number of units to be supplied, latest progress, and the expected completion date for such work (set out in a table);
- (3) of the following information on those projects for which the Government commenced site formation and infrastructure works in each of the past four financial years and the current financial year: project location, estimated number of units to be supplied, latest progress, and the expected completion date of such works (set out in a table);
- (4) of the details of those projects mentioned in (1) which are recommended for implementation after conducting feasibility studies, but have been put on hold or have had no further development plans (set out in the table below);
and

Project location	Estimated number of units to be supplied	Completion date of feasibility study	Completion date of site investigation and design work (if applicable)	Completion date of site formation and infrastructure works (if applicable)	Up-to-date number of months for which the project has been put on hold or has had no further development plan, and the reasons for that

(5) whether it will consider establishing an online platform for the projects to facilitate monitoring by the public, as well as setting clear key performance indicators for relevant government departments and statutory organizations and stipulating that they should be held accountable for unreasonable delays?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau (DEVB), our consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Stephen Wong is as follows.

The Government is responsible for conducting feasibility studies, investigation and design, as well as site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development projects. These projects include items funded by Head 705 and Head 707 of the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRP) under DEVB for civil engineering works and large scale new development works, and items funded by Head 711 of CWRP under Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) for small scale site formation and infrastructure works related to public housing. Formed lands for public housing are mainly handed over to the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) (Note 1) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) (Note 2) for development.

Relevant information of the feasibility studies, investigation and design works, and construction works for infrastructure funded by Head 705 and Head 707 of CWRP to support public housing developments conducted by Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) from 2018 to 2022 is set out at Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively. As regards the feasibility studies in Annex 1, no project has been put on hold or is without further progress.

Relevant information of the feasibility studies, investigation and design works, and construction works for infrastructure funded by Head 711 of CWRP to support public housing developments conducted by CEDD from 2018 to 2022 is set out at Annexes 4, 5 and 6 respectively. Regarding the feasibility studies in Annex 4, no related project has been put on hold or is without

further progress.

The Government has all along been sparing no effort in identifying land for housing development. DEVB and its departments have stepped up efforts related to land supply, with a view to completing the necessary processes and handing over the sites for development in time.

In terms of information publication, THB and HA will upload the updated five-year public housing production forecast onto the websites of THB and HA on a quarterly basis. THB also reports the coming five-year public housing construction programme to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing on an annual basis. Relevant papers are available on LegCo's website.

HA and HKHS will continue to monitor the progress of the various projects and take corresponding mitigation measures, which include urging constructors to increase manpower, expediting progress, stepping up site inspections, convening site meetings, carrying out site supervision and on-site examination, etc. These measures help address the challenges encountered during the construction stage in an effective and speedy manner, with a view to facilitating the early completion of the projects according to the schedule.

Note 1: As a financially autonomous public body, HA funds its public housing programmes with its own resources.

Note 2: As an independent, financially autonomous, self-financing and not-for-profit organisation, HKHS funds its public housing projects with its own resources.