

LCQ11: Sites already rezoned for purpose of public housing development

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 20):

Question:

A site located at the junction of Sung Wong Toi Road and To Kwa Wan Road, where the Kowloon Animal Management Centre (AMC(K)) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department as well as the ex-quarters and vehicle workshop of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department are housed, was rezoned in April 2016 for the purpose of public housing development. In a paper recently submitted to the Finance Committee of this Council, the Government indicates its plan to relocate AMC(K) to another place and then complete the demolition work for the vacated AMC(K) in the second quarter of 2024. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the site was rezoned for the aforesaid purpose in as early as 2016, of the reasons why the demolition work concerned will not be completed until 2024 (i.e. after a lapse of eight years); whether the Steering Committee on Land Supply (the Steering Committee) has held discussions and taken follow-up actions in this regard; the anticipated works commencement date of the public housing development project concerned;

(2) of the number of housing projects on sites rezoned for the purpose of public housing development, since 2013, which could not commence as scheduled, and set out in a table the following details of such projects: (i) project names, (ii) site locations, (iii) number of public housing units, (iv) original commencement dates for the works, (v) causes for the works being unable to commence as scheduled, and (vi) latest works progress; and

(3) of the policy bureau or government department responsible for coordinating and supervising the relocation and demolition of government facilities on sites already rezoned for other purposes; the role played by the Steering Committee on the work concerned?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Transport and Housing Bureau, we set out our response to various parts of the question below:

(1) In 2014, the Government proposed to rezone a site at the junction of Sung Wong Toi Road and To Kwa Wan Road for public housing development. Upon the completion of technical studies in early 2015, the relevant rezoning was

gazetted in May 2015 and subsequently approved by the Executive Council in April 2016.

To implement the public housing project, the existing Kowloon Animal Management Centre (the Centre) has to be re-provisioned. Upon completion of studies by the relevant departments, it was decided that the Centre will be re-provisioned in the Kai Tak Development Area. The Government has also completed the technical studies for the new Centre and is seeking funding approval from the Legislative Council for the works associated with the re-provisioning. Subject to the funding approval, it is anticipated that the construction works for the new Centre would commence in the third quarter of 2020, with a view to completing the said construction and demolition works by the second quarter of 2024. In addition, the Housing Department (HD) has been working on the planning and design of the public housing project in parallel, with a view to commencing the construction works for the project as soon as possible when the existing Centre is relocated and demolished in 2024, and completing the public housing project in 2027/28. In the process, the HD has been maintaining close liaison with the relevant departments, including the Planning Department (PlanD) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, etc. to jointly take forward the project.

(2) Since 2013, a total of 81 sites have been rezoned for public housing development. The relevant details can be found at Annex. Among them, the public housing projects on 36 sites have been commenced or completed. For the remaining 45 public housing development sites, preparatory works including land resumption and clearance, as well as site formation and infrastructure design and works, etc. are being carried out in accordance with their development timetables. Upon completion of the relevant procedures, the Hong Kong Housing Authority or the Hong Kong Housing Society will commence public housing construction works on sites as soon as possible.

(3) Generally speaking, where sites with existing government facilities are required for housing development or other uses, the departments responsible for the affected facilities would decide whether to permanently or temporarily re-provision the facilities within or outside the district according to their operational needs and the utilisation of the facilities. They may request the relevant departments (such as the PlanD, the Lands Department or the Government Property Agency) to identify land or premises for the purpose of re-provisioning, in order to meet the programme of the proposed use. If relevant departments could not agree on demolition/re-provisioning or timing of site delivery, the matter will be escalated to the relevant policy bureaux for handling and may, if necessary, be submitted to the Steering Committee for discussion.

Announcement by Judiciary

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (May 20) said that a person wearing an electronic wristband/monitoring wristband was found on the lower ground floors of the High Court (HC) Building this morning. The incident has been referred to the Police.

The HC Registry and the Resource Centre for Unrepresented Litigants were closed this afternoon for cleaning. Court users who have taken tickets for relevant services can return to LG4/F tomorrow (May 21) according to the "Real-time queue status for the High Court Registries" on the Judiciary website, without queuing for tickets again.

Services of other registries inside the HC Building, including the Probate Registry and the Appeals Registry, are not affected this afternoon.

The Judiciary will heed the advice of Centre for Health Protection to step up cleaning and disinfection, including sterilising the places in the court building that the person concerned has visited and nearby public places with diluted household bleach.

Parties, legal representatives and other court users who are subject to any quarantine requirement or medical surveillance should not come to the Judiciary premises. They should as soon as practicable apply to the court for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

Since early February, the Judiciary has put in place appropriate preventive measures to enhance the environmental hygiene of court buildings. The Judiciary will constantly review the situation and introduce any new measure as appropriate.

SCS on civil service pay adjustment

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session in the Legislative Council Complex today (May 20):

Reporter: Do you think it's appropriate to ... (inaudible) pay rise ... (inaudible), given that the Hong Kong economy ... (inaudible)?

Secretary for the Civil Service: As the Secretary for the Civil Service, I would follow closely the well-established mechanism in considering the annual

pay adjustment for the civil service. This mechanism is for the Chief Executive-in-Council to decide on the annual pay adjustment. And in reaching a decision, we will look at not just the Pay Trend Survey result, but also the other relevant factors including the state of Hong Kong economy, the Government's fiscal position, changes in the cost of living, and of course the claims by the staff side, and also the possible impact on the morale of the civil service. So you would note that these factors are very comprehensive. And in reaching a decision, we need to consider all these factors and then take a view on it. So I would not suggest taking a view or announcing any possible outcome at this stage because this would pre-empt the decision to be made by the Chief Executive-in-Council.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

LCQ21: Child Assessment Service

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Kwok Ka-ki and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 20):

Question:

The Child Assessment Service under the Department of Health (DH) provides professional assessments for and follow-up services needed by children who are under 12 years of age with developmental disorders or behavioural problems. Seven Child Assessment Centres (CACs) under DH provide such services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the (i) number of new cases, (ii) attendance, and (iii) average, longest and shortest waiting time of new cases in respect of each CAC in each of the past five years;

(2) of the (i) services provided and (ii) average daily number of cases under each service handled last year by each CAC; and

(3) whether the services provided by the various CACs have been affected by the recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (commonly known as "the Wuhan pneumonia") epidemic; if so, of the details (including the numbers of children and cases affected); whether DH has assessed the impacts of the delay in receiving assessments on the affected children in terms of their living and learning; whether DH will expedite handling the backlog of cases, upon the full resumption of services at various CACs, by allocating additional resources, extending the service hours at CACs and deploying additional manpower; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(1) and (2) In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), reply of various parts of the question is as follows:

The Child Assessment Service (CAS) under DH, which has seven Child Assessment Centres (CACs) in Hong Kong, provides comprehensive assessments and diagnosis to children under 12 years of age who are suspected to have developmental problems. After assessment, follow-up plans will be formulated according to the individual needs of children. Children will be referred to other appropriate service providers identified for training and education support. Pending assessment and rehabilitation services, the CAS will provide interim support to the children's parents, with a view to support the development and growth of the children. All CACs provide similar service.

The number of newly referred cases received by the CAS in the past five years are as follows:

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of new cases	9 872	10 188	10 438	10 466	9 799

The attendance at the seven CACs under the CAS in the past five years is as follows:

Year CAC	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Central Kowloon CAC	6 476	5 666	5 489	5 632	5 492
Ha Kwai Chung CAC	7 033	7 373	7 209	6 413	5 827
Pamela Youde CAC (Kwun Tong)	7 243	7 120	7 187	7 315	6 577
Pamela Youde CAC (Sha Tin)	7 152	7 933	8 262	8 493	7 535
Fanling CAC	4 055	3 882	3 892	4 182	4 875
Tuen Mun CAC	5 465	5 194	5 384	5 610	5 186
Ngau Tau Kok CAC*	0	0	0	1 682	2 513
Total:	37 424	37 168	37 423	39 327	38 005

* Ngau Tau Kok CAC commenced operation from January 2018.

The CAS has adopted a triage system to ensure that children with urgent and more serious conditions are accorded with higher priority in assessment with a view to enhancing service efficiency. The actual waiting time depends on the complexity and conditions of individual cases. DH does not maintain statistics on the average, the longest or the shortest waiting time for assessment of new cases as well as the average daily caseload of individual centre.

(3) Noting the increasing demands for the services provided by the CAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, with effective infection control measures put in place, the CAS has all along maintained assessment service in order to provide timely assessment to the children with suspected developmental problems, so as to facilitate them to obtain support service like training and education support at the earliest possible time. To reduce client flow and minimise social contact, the CAS has suspended interim support to parents, such as seminars, workshops and practical training, since February 2020. When the pandemic is eased, CAS will consider gradually resuming relevant activities after assessing the risk and infection control measures.

LCQ7: Land costs for subsidised sale flat projects

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 20):

Question :

At present, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has to pay the Government, for each subsidised sale flat (SSF) project, 35 per cent of the development cost of the flats sold as the land cost for the Government's provision of site formation and supporting infrastructure, with the development cost being the aggregate of the construction cost and overhead cost. Regarding the land costs for SSF projects, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) since when the Government has charged HA land costs for SSF projects, and of the justifications for setting the land cost at the level of 35 per cent of the development cost;

(2) of the following details of each of the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) housing courts sold under each sale exercise since the resumption of the sale of HOS flats in 2014 (set out in Table 1):

- (i) sale exercise,
- (ii) district in which the housing court is located,
- (iii) name of the housing court,
- (iv) total number of flats in the housing court,
- (v) average per-square-foot price of the flats (in saleable floor area),
- (vi) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per flat, of the land cost,
- (vii) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per square foot of saleable floor area, of the expenditure incurred by the Government on site formation and supporting infrastructure for the domestic element of the housing court,

and

(viii) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per square foot of saleable floor area, of the land value at full market value for the domestic element of the housing court;

Table 1

(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)		(vii)		(viii)	
					(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)

(3) of the following details of each of the Green Form Subsidized Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) housing courts since the sale of GSH flats in 2016 (set out in Table 2):

- (i) district in which the housing court is located,
- (ii) name of the housing court,
- (iii) total number of flats in the housing court,
- (iv) average per-square-foot price of the flats,
- (v) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per flat, of the land cost,
- (vi) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per square foot of saleable floor area, of the expenditure incurred by the Government on site formation and supporting infrastructure for the domestic element of the housing court, and
- (vii) (a) total amount and (b) average amount per square foot of saleable floor area, of the land value at full market value for the domestic element of the housing court; and

Table 2

(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)		(vi)		(vii)	
				(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)

(4) whether it reviewed, in the past three years, the approach for setting the land cost; if so, of the details (including the date and outcome of the review, and whether a report was published); if not, the reasons for that; whether it has plans in the coming three years to adjust downward the level of the land cost (e.g. setting it at 25 per cent of the development cost) so as to lower the prices of HOS and GSH flats?

Reply:

The President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Andrew Wan is as follows:

(1) and (4) According to the record of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), HA has, since 1980s, been paying the Government a project development cost of

35 per cent for subsidised sale flats (SSFs) (including Home Ownership Scheme (HOS)) as contribution for the Government's provision of site formation and infrastructure. In addition, the Government provides land to HA for the development of SSFs at a nominal premium of \$1,000. In the past three years, the Government and HA have not conducted review on the determination arrangement of the land development cost for SSFs. The Government has already contributed substantial subsidy to the land development of SSFs, and has no plan to initiate a review.

Pricing of SSFs is determined based on the affordability of the applicants, and is not linked to the land development cost. According to the prevailing pricing mechanism for SSFs, the price of the flats for sale is determined based on the affordability test which uses the median monthly household income of non-owner occupier households as benchmark, and the number of affordable flats is at least 75 per cent.

(2) and (3) Information of housing courts sold under each sale exercise of HOS since 2014 and information of housing courts sold under the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) since 2016 is set out in Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.

We are not able to provide the Government's expenditure on land development for the above projects since the boundaries of the government site formation works are usually not confined to the public housing sites alone. Expenditure of government site formation works is also affected by various factors, including site location, site condition, geology and proposed site formation levels, etc. In fact, consideration would also be given for the concerned works to provide public roads in the vicinity and supporting facilities on a district basis. The Government's infrastructure provisions might also be upgraded when appropriate to meet the overall expected development of the districts, the projected planning parameters, the estimated population and traffic growth in the district, etc.