

LCQ16: Records and materials on housing policy

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

Regarding the records/materials on housing policy from 1953 (the devastating fire in the Shek Kip Mei squatter area) to April 1973 (the establishment of the Hong Kong Housing Authority) (the early stage), and from May 1973 to last year (the latter stage), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of a breakdown of the quantity of records/materials on housing policy by time period of their creation and classification (i.e. (i) confidential at present, (ii) confidential when created but declassified at present, (iii) restricted at present, (iv) restricted when created but declassified at present, and (v) open/general documents since creation) (set out in the table below);

	Time period	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	Total
The early stage	1953 to 1960						
	1961 to 1970						
	1971 to April 1973						
	Total:						
The latter stage	May 1973 to 1980						
	1981 to 1990						
	1991 to 2000						
	2001 to 2010						
	2011 to 2018						
	Total:						

(2) of a breakdown of the quantity of records/materials on housing policy currently kept by the Government Records Service (GRS) by time period of their creation and classification (i.e. (i) confidential when created but declassified at present, (ii) restricted when created but declassified at present, and (iii) open/general documents since creation) (set out in the table below); and

	Time period	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	Total
The early stage	1953 to 1960				
	1961 to 1970				
	1971 to April 1973				
	Total:				
The latter stage	May 1973 to 1980				
	1981 to 1990				
	1991 to 2000				
	2001 to 2010				
	2011 to 2018				
	Total:				

(3) whether it has issued a code of practice and guidelines on records management to housing-related statutory bodies, and required them to transfer to GRS for preservation their records/materials on housing policy and of historical value, so that such records/materials may, after arrangement, be made available for public access?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Hon Andrew Wan's question is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) is the statutory body tasked to develop and implement a public housing programme to achieve the policy objective of the Government. Its executive arm is the Housing Department (HD), which also supports the Transport and Housing Bureau in dealing with all housing-related policies and matters.

HD has all along been handling records management work in compliance with the Records Management Manual and guidelines issued by the Government Records Service (GRS). A breakdown of the quantity of records by the time period of their creation and the classification as requested in the question is not readily available. The compilation of such statistics would require considerable amount of time in data collection and collation in light of the vast amount of records of various HD divisions, sub-divisions and regional offices involved. We are hence unable to provide the requested information. According to GRS' requirement, HD regularly reports the quantity of their records to GRS. In early 2019, HD reported as at December 31, 2018 a total of 92 897 linear metres of records as classified below:

Nature	Quantity (in linear metre)
Administrative records	18 304
Programme records	74 593

Total	92 897
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(2) According to the General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules developed by GRS and the records retention and disposal schedules approved by GRS, bureaux/departments (B/Ds) are required to transfer time-expired records having archival value or potential archival value to GRS for permanent retention or appraisal.

There are two types of archival records: classified archival records and unclassified archival records. Records that are classified as confidential and restricted at the time of their creation fall under the category of classified archival records, and records that are not listed as classified when they are created go under the category of unclassified archival records. Access to archival records kept by GRS is subject to the Public Records (Access) Rules 1996. In general, archival records which have been in existence for not less than 30 years or whose contents have at any time been published are open for public access. Public access to archival records closed for less than 30 years requires prior application to GRS. Classified archival records containing sensitive information are handled or reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a longer closure period is required. Every year, GRS requests all B/Ds to review classified archival records approaching the end of the 30-year closure period so as to ascertain whether these records can be made available for public inspection upon the expiry of the 30-year closure period.

At present, there are a total of 2 980 archival records transferred by the former Housing Branch and HD and retained by GRS. A total of 2 071 of these archival records are unclassified, while four classified ones have been made open to public access. A breakdown of these records by the time period of their creation and classification is as follows:

Time period	Unclassified records	Classified records open to public access	Total
1945 to 1952	8	0	8
1953 to 1960	355	0	355
1961 to 1970	207	2	209
1971 to April 1973	165	1	166
Total	735	3	738
May 1973 to 1980	286	1	287
1981 to 1990	466	0	466
1991 to 2000	504	0	504
2001 to 2010	80	0	80
2011 to 2018	0	0	0
Total	1 336	1	1 337

Grand total	2 071	4	2 075
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For the remaining 905 records, they are not yet open to public access because personal data are involved or they have been closed for less than 30 years, etc.

(3) GRS formulates and implements government records management policies and programmes, offers advice and support to B/Ds on matters and solutions related to records management, and provides storage and disposal services for inactive records. In addition, GRS identifies and preserves records of archival value, valuable government publications and printed materials, enhances public awareness of Hong Kong's documentary heritage, and provides research and reference services. GRS' purview covers all B/Ds, but its duties do not include issuing codes of practice or guidelines on records management to statutory/public organisations or monitoring their records management practices.

That said, GRS published a booklet entitled "Good Records Management Practices" in 2011 to share good practices in records management with these organisations and encourage them to donate records of archival value to GRS. Since 2013, GRS has also been holding annual records management seminars for these organisations. Six seminars have been held thus far, attended by over 1 500 participants from 64 statutory/public bodies. Besides, GRS has been providing records management briefings and advice to individual organisations upon request.

As mentioned in item (1) above, HD is the executive arm of HA (one of the housing-related statutory bodies) and responsible for the management of all HA records. HD manages all such records in accordance with the Records Management Manual and guidelines issued by GRS, which includes transferring records of archival value to GRS for appraisal and permanent retention.

[LCQ15: Development plans for three squatter areas in Kowloon East](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

It is learnt that there are three squatter areas in Kowloon East (i.e. Chuk Yuen United Village, Ngau Chi Wan Village and Cha Kwo Ling Village) which are yet to be redeveloped. Chuk Yuen United Village and Ngau Chi Wan

Village have been zoned "Government, Institution or Community" sites but without any concrete development plans, while Cha Kwo Ling Village is within an "Undetermined" zone. Regarding the development plans for these three squatter areas, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective current numbers of (i) surveyed and (ii) non-surveyed squatter structures in (a) Chuk Yuen United Village, (b) Ngau Chi Wan Village and (c) Cha Kwo Ling Village;

(2) given that the Government has earmarked a piece of land in Ngau Chi Wan Village for the construction of a community hall but has not put forward any implementation plan for years, whether there has been any change in the planned use of the land concerned; if so, of the latest planned use and the development timetable; if not, the timetable and details for the construction of the community hall;

(3) whether the Government will, in the coming three years, conduct detailed planning for the three squatter areas; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it will conduct re-planning for the three squatter areas in order to release more lands for public housing development; if so, of the details as well as the estimated number and floor area of public housing units that can be provided; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to adopting a multi-pronged land supply strategy with a view to meeting the land demand for different uses at different time. With regard to squatter areas, the Government will, taking into account factors such as development plan of the squatter area (if any), environmental improvement or safety reasons, clear and demolish the squatters to release the land for alternative long-term development uses.

My reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Under the prevailing squatter control policy, squatter structures surveyed during the 1982 Squatter Control Survey (SCS) were allocated squatter survey numbers, but they remain unauthorised in nature. They are "tolerated" on a temporary basis, provided that the location, dimensions, building materials and use are the same as the record in the 1982 SCS, until the surveyed squatter structure has to be cleared for development, environmental improvement or safety reasons, or until the surveyed squatter structure is phased out through natural wastage.

At present, the numbers of surveyed squatter structures in Chuk Yuen United Village, Ngau Chi Wan Village and Cha Kwo Ling Village are around 49, 266 and 475 respectively. The number of surveyed squatter structures is based on the records of the 1982 SCS and adjusted due to deletion of SCS records after 1982 for various known reasons (e.g. enforcement against breaches of

squatter control or squatters found non-existent).

The Lands Department does not keep separate statistics on the number of squatter structures not covered in the 1982 SCS records. Appropriate squatter control actions will be taken against unauthorised structures, which are not "tolerated" on a temporary basis, once they are identified.

(2) The site reserved for the development of a community hall within Ngau Chi Wan Village is zoned "Government, Institution or Community" (G/IC) on the Ngau Chi Wan Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K12/16. At present, we have no plan to change the reserved use of this site. The Home Affairs Department will carry out the necessary planning work of a new community hall in a timely manner in liaison with relevant departments, taking into account the overall planning of Ngau Chi Wan area (including Ngau Chi Wan Village), development progress and population.

(3) and (4) We agree that redevelopment of squatter areas in urban area may release precious urban sites for addressing the shortage of developable land. With regard to the three squatter areas as mentioned in the question, we plan to first commence a study on the long-term use of Cha Kwo Ling Village and its development scale in mid-2019, and will gradually review the long-term development of Chuk Yuen United Village and Ngau Chi Wan Village in a timely manner. The long-term land uses, potential floor area and flat yield of these sites will be ascertained after completion of relevant studies.

LCQ10: Future plan for the General Post Office Building in Central

Following is a question by the Hon Hui Chi-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

The Government plans to relocate the Hongkong Post's Headquarters, which is currently housed in the General Post Office Building in Central (GPO Building) situated in Site 3 of the new Central harbourfront, to a postal complex to be built in Kowloon Bay. The vacated GPO Building will be demolished to allow Site 3 to be used for commercial development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the timetable for the demolition works of the GPO Building;
- (2) of the planned timing for including Site 3 in the Land Sale Programme;
- (3) as some community groups have requested that the GPO Building be preserved in-situ in view of its conservation value, whether the Government has invited the Antiquities Advisory Board to conduct a historical building

grading exercise for the building; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that Docomomo International, an international conservation body, included the GPO Building in the list of "Heritage in Danger" in 2015, and wrote to the Chief Executive in 2018 urging the Government to preserve the building, whether the Government has made a response; and

(5) whether it will consider afresh preserving in-situ and revitalising the GPO Building?

Reply:

President,

The General Post Office Building (GPO Building) is at the south-western corner of Site 3 of the new Central harbourfront. The design concept of Site 3 was formulated under the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront (UDS) completed in 2011 following two stages of public engagement (PE) exercises. The relevant urban design requirements were subsequently incorporated into the planning brief for the site endorsed by the Town Planning Board (TPB) in December 2016 after consultation with the Central and Western District Council (DC) and the Harbourfront Commission. When taking forward the development of Site 3 in future, the developer should deliver and comply with the requirements laid down in the planning brief.

According to the design concept recommended by the UDS and the requirements of the planning brief, implementing the development of Site 3 requires demolition of the GPO building. The development of the site will not only provide additional supply of Grade A office in the Central Business District, its prime harbourfront location will also be conducive to providing quality public open space for public enjoyment. The design for the site has to incorporate a low-density commercial development with building height significantly lower than surrounding office blocks; a quality and green public open space occupying more than half of the site area (i.e. at least 2.5 hectares); and a continuous landscaped deck, stretching across the site in a north-south direction and bringing people from the hinterland of Central to the new harbourfront, which will enhance the accessibility of the new Central harbourfront.

My reply to Hon Hui Chi-fung's question is as follows:

(1) The GPO Building will be demolished by the developer of Site 3 upon completion of the following two reprovisioning works:

(a) reprovisioning of the Hongkong Post Headquarters to a government site near the Central Mail Centre in Kowloon Bay. The Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) approved the related funding in October 2018 and the new building is expected to commence operation in 2023; and

(b) reprovisioning the district-tied postal facilities (viz. GPO Delivery Office, Speedpost Section, GPO Post Office Counters and Post Office Box Section) in the part of Site 3 to the north of Lung Wo Road. The facilities will be holistically designed and constructed by the developer in accordance

with the requirements laid down by the Government.

(2) Site 3 has yet been included in the 2019-20 Land Sale Programme. As similar to other commercial sites disposed of by the Government, the Government will make necessary announcement in the annual and quarterly land sale programmes following the established practice.

(3), (4) and (5) A concern group requested the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) to carry out grading assessment on the GPO Building in October 2018. In December 2018, the AAB, on the basis of its decision in September 2013 (i.e. grading assessment on buildings built in 1970 or later would not be carried out for the time being), decided not to carry out grading assessment on the GPO Building, which commenced operation in 1976.

As mentioned above, the UDS recommendations are made after extensive PE exercises. Different public and advisory bodies, including the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development, AAB, former Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, TPB and the 18 DCs, had been consulted during the process. It is worth mentioning that respecting cultural heritage was one of the urban design themes in Stage 2 PE of the UDS. To this end, the relevant consultation digest had listed a range of cultural heritage sites in Central, and the GPO Building was not amongst such sites. Retaining the GPO Building will contravene the design concept of Site 3 and requirements stipulated in the planning brief, undermining the overall development potential of Site 3 and preventing the vision of creating a more attractive, vibrant and accessible new Central harbourfront from being brought into fruition.

As we have responded at the meetings of the LegCo Public Works Subcommittee and FC, the Government will continue to take forward the development of Site 3 according to the original design concept and the planning brief of the site.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs seized about 2 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$510,000 at Hong Kong International Airport on March 18.

Customs officers inspected a parcel arriving in Hong Kong from Canada on March 18 and seized the batch of suspected cannabis buds inside the parcel.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (March 26) arrested a 28-year-old man suspected to be connected to the case in Sheung Shui.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will maintain close contact with Hong Kong Post and the logistics industries to step up action against drug trafficking through postal parcel or express courier channels.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Customs also issued a reminder that cannabis and tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) are classified as dangerous drugs under the Ordinance. Importation of products (including food and drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is prohibited unless the relevant provisions in the Ordinance are complied with. In order to avoid breaching the law inadvertently, special attention should be paid to the packaging labels of food and drinks.

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



[LCQ8: New delivery arrangement for mail items](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

It has been reported that the Hongkong Post (HKP) has recently implemented a new measure: when postmen make door delivery of mail items

requiring signature by recipients (such as registered, Speedpost and Local CourierPost letters/packets), or when post office counter staff deliver mail items requiring signature to persons holding mail delivery notification cards, they are no longer required to request the recipients of these mail items to produce identity documents for identity verification. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether HKP had consulted the public before implementing the new measure; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether HKP has so far received any complaint lodged by members of the public concerning the new measure; if so, of the details;

(3) as some members of the public have pointed out that mail items requiring signature, the charges for which are higher than those for surface mail items, originally have an important advantage of ensuring that the recipients are either the designated recipients of mail items or persons whose identities are traceable, whether HKP has assessed if the new measure has rendered mail items requiring signature losing this advantage and thus made such items no different from surface mail items; if HKP has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the remedial measures; if the assessment outcome is in the negative, the justifications for that; and

(4) as some members of the public have pointed out that people post mail items requiring signature for the purpose of preventing recipients, after receiving such mail items, from denying receipt of them, but under the new measure, when the designated recipients of mail items requiring signature claim that they have never received the items, HKP can hardly verify such claims as there is no way to confirm the identities of the recipients of the items, thus defeating the purpose of posting such items, whether HKP has any solution?

Reply:

President,

With regard to the question raised by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan, our reply is as follows:

It is the established principle of various postal administrations and courier sector that mail items are delivered according to the address (i.e. delivery to the address) but not to the designated addressee as given on the mail item (i.e. delivery to the addressee). This is also the practice adopted by Hongkong Post. Under this principle, mail delivery is mainly classified into two categories, namely, "signature for the receipt not required" and "signature for the receipt required".

For a mail item where signature for the receipt is not required, delivery is deemed successful when such an item is delivered to the address (such as in the case of putting the mail item into the letter box of its corresponding address). For a mail item where signature for the receipt is

required (including registered mail, Speedpost item, parcel and Local CourierPost item, etc.), delivery is deemed successful only when such an item is delivered to the address and signature for the receipt is obtained from the recipient who does not necessarily have to be the addressee.

In the past, for a mail item where signature for the receipt was required, Hongkong Post would require the person who received the item at the address at the time of delivery to produce his/her identification document if it could not be ascertained whether such person was entitled to receiving it. The name of the recipient and the first four alphanumeric characters of his/her identification document would be recorded. In case of unsuccessful door delivery (such as no one was present to receive the item), a notification card would be left at the address concerned or in its letter box, notifying the addressee to collect the item from a designated post office. At the time of collection, the card holder would be required to produce his/her identification document, so as to prove that he/she is the addressee of the mail item. If the card holder was not the addressee of the item, he/she would be required to produce a copy of the identification document of the addressee and the original identification document of his/her own. If the identification document of the addressee or the card holder did not show the name as given on the mail item, he/she would be required to provide supporting documents to show that the addressee was living with the card holder or to prove their relationship (such as certificate of marriage, residential proof showing that the card holder lived at the delivery address, etc). Staff at the post office would examine the above documents and record the name of the card holder and the first four alphanumeric characters of his/her identification document when the mail item was delivered.

With the rapid development of e-commerce, the number of online purchases delivered through the postal system has been increasing. Some of the online shopping platforms allow online shoppers to post their orders without using their real names. Hongkong Post received quite a number of complaints directly from members of the public or referred by the Office of the Ombudsman, questioning the reason for requiring the person receiving or collecting the mail item to produce his/her identification document or other information, adding that it would be difficult for some of them to produce proof of address (such as housewives and minors who would not be holders of household accounts). It was considered that the above measures had caused great nuisances to the public and failed to keep up with social development.

Hongkong Post conducted a review in this connection, and considered that its past practice had deviated from the principle of "delivery to the address" and would be easily mistaken that mail delivery service was based on a principle of "delivery to the addressee". The past experience also showed that information about the names and the first four alphanumeric characters of the identification documents of the recipients collected at time of delivering the mail item did not help much in tracking down the missing mail items. As such, Hongkong Post has since March 4 made the following adjustments to the delivery arrangement for mail items where signature for the receipt is required:

(a) if someone is present at the delivery address, he/she is allowed to receive the mail item and sign to acknowledge its receipt, without the need to produce his/her identification document or his/her information be recorded; and

(b) if no one is present at the delivery address to receive the mail item, the postman will leave a notification card at the address or in its letter box. At the time of collecting the item and signing to acknowledge its receipt, the card holder will not be required to produce his/her identification document, or proof showing that he/she is living with the addressee or his/her relationship with the addressee. The post office will file the notification card and the process will be taped by the closed-circuit television at the counter as in the normal circumstances.

The new delivery arrangement above has been operating smoothly since its implementation.

According to Hongkong Post, there are enquiries and complaints concerning the new delivery arrangements (a total of 15 as at March 13). The main concern is whether it is safe to deliver mail items which require signature for the receipt without checking the identification documents (e.g., a person would be able to collect another's mail item if the notification card is stolen), and that it would be difficult to track an item in the event of a dispute over its delivery.

Hongkong Post understands the worries of individual members of the public and notes that letter boxes of tenement buildings in some old districts and the rural areas are less secure. Starting from March 20, Hongkong Post has fine-tuned the new arrangements. When door delivery of a mail item which requires signature for the receipt is unsuccessful and a notification card is to be issued, the card holder when making collection from the designated post office will be required to produce his/her identification document and his/her name will be recorded before signing to acknowledge its receipt.

Hongkong Post will continue to monitor the operation of the new arrangements, and from time to time assess the impact of the arrangements and adjust the operational details taking into account the factors of social changes, public needs and mail security. Hongkong Post will also continue to promote the correct way of writing addresses; remind senders to provide return addresses and affix sufficient postage, and the need for households or commercial tenants to install secure and proper letterboxes etc., in order to facilitate safe and smooth delivery of mails.