

LCQ4: Permanent exhibitions of the Hong Kong Science Museum

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

According to the pledge of the Hong Kong Science Museum (HKScM), the HKScM will provide at least 500 exhibits in-house at all times, of which 70 per cent will be interactive exhibits, and will keep at least 90 per cent of the interactive exhibits in working order. As pointed out in the Director of Audit's Report No. 75 (the Report) published in 2020, while permanent exhibitions at the HKScM were generally designed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to last for 10 to 15 years, as of September 2020, 10 of the 15 permanent exhibitions at the HKScM had been operating for more than 15 to 29 years. In its Minute issued in 2021 in response to the Report, the Government pledged to adopt enhancement measures, while advising that the HKScM had formulated a renewal plan and timetable to update the contents of various permanent exhibitions and replace ageing interactive exhibits. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the implementation situation of the HKScM's pledge in the past three years;
- (2) of the details of the renewal plan for various permanent exhibitions at the HKScM (including the quantity of exhibits, costs involved and works schedule), together with the implementation situation of the plan;
- (3) whether the HKScM has put in place a regular refurbishment plan for permanent exhibitions to sustain their public appeal; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) of the attendance at the HKScM in each of the past three years, together with the ratio of local, Mainland and overseas visitors?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Chun-ying is as follows:

- (1) The Hong Kong Science Museum (HKScM) has been able to meet the performance pledges as stated in the question for the past three years. Details are tabulated as follows:

	Number of exhibits on average	Proportion of interactive exhibits	Proportion of interactive exhibits in working order
Pledge	At least 500	At least 70%	At least 90%
2021-22	695	72.5%	98.6%
2022-23	620	75.6%	98.9%
2023-24	711	71.6%	99.0%

(2) and (3) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been renewing the permanent exhibitions at the HKScM at irregular intervals. The duration of exhibition mainly depends on factors such as its popularity, etc. There is no performance pledge for the duration of the exhibition but typically they will last for 10 to 15 years. The LCSD has formulated plans and timetables for renewing these permanent exhibitions. At present, four of the 15 permanent exhibitions at the HKScM have completed the renewal orderly. Details are as follows:

Gallery	No. of exhibits (set/piece)	Works period	Cost (HK\$)
Biodiversity Gallery	140	2014-16	\$10,000,000
Children's Gallery	31	2016-17	\$8,300,000
Earth Science Gallery	48	2018-21	\$20,000,000
Palaeontology Gallery	60	2020-23	\$20,000,000

For the rest of the 11 permanent exhibitions, nine will be renewed in 2025. Details are as follows:

Gallery	Renewal plan	Estimated Cost (HK\$)
Telecommunications Gallery	Will be transformed into the Innotech Gallery in 2025	\$40,000,000
Transportation Hall	Will be transformed into the Smart Living Gallery in 2025	\$36,000,000
Home Technology Hall		
Food Science Hall		
Electricity and Magnetism Gallery	Among the original 171 exhibits, 38 have been replaced. 15 new exhibits will be added in 2025	\$20,000,000
Light		
Motion		
Sound		
Mathematics		

The LCSD will plan to commence the renewal of the last two galleries (World of Mirrors and The Jockey Club Environmental Conservation Gallery) in 2026-27 subject to the availability of resources.

(4) From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the number of visitors to the HKScM were 1 074 769, 1 101 143 and 1 351 783 respectively. The attendance was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused intermittent temporary closure of the HKScM during the first two years. While the LCSD does not have a demographic breakdown of these attendance figures, according to its online survey conducted from October 2023 to September 2024, the percentages of local, Mainland and overseas visitors to the HKScM were around 72.5 per cent, 14.8 per cent and 12.7 per cent respectively.

LCQ6: Employers' contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Kin-por and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

The Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) will issue the "Payment Notice for Mandatory Provident Fund Contributions and Surcharge" (Payment Notice) to employers defaulting on Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) contributions to recover the default contributions and a surcharge calculated at 5 per cent of the default amount. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the MPFA's recovery of default MPF contributions from employers in the past five years, including the number of Payment Notice issued, the respective number and percentage of successful recovery cases (including default contributions recovered both before and after the deadlines specified in the Payment Notice) and cases where recovery is ongoing, as well as the amounts involved;

(2) given that the MPFA will soon be able to directly track the situation of employers' contributions when the eMPF Platform is fully operational, how the MPFA will expedite the processing of default contribution cases; and

(3) as the MPFA indicated in April 2023 that it was studying amending the legislation to improve the existing mechanism and introduce a tiered surcharge arrangement, so as to further increase the deterrent effect on employers' defaulting on MPF contributions and to protect employees' rights and interests, of the progress and timetable of the relevant work?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA), our reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Figures concerning the recovery of default Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) contributions by the MPFA in the past five financial years (FYs) are set out in the table below:

FY	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of "Payment Notices for MPF Contributions and Surcharge" (PNs) issued (Note 1)	261 100	304 000	317 500	346 700	376 300
Amount successfully recovered for affected employees (Note 2)	\$158 million	\$196 million	\$140 million	\$145 million	\$155 million
Number of affected employees	95 300	108 000	82 800	96 600	96 600

Note 1: The data show the total number of PNs issued by the MPFA for each contribution period within the same FY. In other words, if the same employer continuously fails to make MPF mandatory contribution, the MPFA will issue one PN to that employer every month.

Note 2: Amount successfully recovered for affected employees included default MPF contributions and the relevant surcharge.

In the past five FYs, about 30 per cent of the cases were settled on or before the due date (i.e. 14 days from the date of issuance of PNs) after the MPFA having issued PNs. The MPFA will continue to investigate the remaining 70 per cent of the cases and initiate civil proceedings to recover the arrears for affected employees having regard to the actual circumstances. In FY 2023-24, the MPFA filed a total of 1 621 civil claims on default contributions, including 1 378 cases to the Small Claims Tribunal, 54 cases to the District Court, and 189 proofs of debt filed with the liquidators or the Official Receiver's Office.

(2) The eMPF Platform launched this June aims to streamline, standardise and automate MPF scheme administration processes, thereby enhancing the overall operational efficiency of the MPF System, including the recovery of default MPF contributions from non-compliant employers. Upon the full implementation of the eMPF Platform, in the event of default contributions, the MPFA will be able to swiftly and directly verify the MPF contribution status of employers via the Platform, and issue PNs to relevant employers earlier to remind them

to settle the arrears as soon as possible. The entire process is expected to be expedited by about three weeks as compared to the time before the Platform was launched. In addition, the eMPF Platform could also enable the MPFA to expedite the handling of suspected non-compliance cases and improve the efficiency of investigation and enforcement work, thereby offering more effective protection of employees' MPF benefits.

(3) The MPFA is all along committed to safeguarding employees' MPF accrued benefits by actively promoting awareness among employers and employees to fulfill their statutory obligations on one hand, and proactively conducting investigations and taking enforcement actions against suspected non-compliant employers to recover default MPF contributions for affected employees on the other. Depending on the circumstances of individual cases, the MPFA's investigation and enforcement actions involve a number of procedures, including verifying relevant contribution information with trustees; issuing PNs to defaulting employers; contacting defaulting employers to collate relevant income information of affected employees and demanding employers to settle the arrears as soon as possible; in the event of persistent default, initiating civil procedures and filing claims on behalf of the affected employee with the Small Claims Tribunal or other courts to recover the arrears, as well as considering whether criminal prosecution should be taken; and submitting proof of debt to the liquidators or Official Receiver's Office on behalf of the affected employees, etc. Regarding the suggestion on implementing tiered surcharge for default contributions, the Government and the MPFA will give due considerations and follow up as appropriate.

LCQ19: Staff employed under outsourced service contracts of public and subvented organisations

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

The Government introduced enhancement measures in April 2019 and May last year to enhance the labour protection of non-skilled workers employed by contractors under outsourced service contracts, and indicated that it would encourage public organisations and non-governmental organisations in receipt of government funding to adopt the enhancement measures as far as practicable. However, it is learnt that non-skilled workers employed by public organisations, statutory bodies and subvented service organisations under outsourced service contracts have so far not been able to benefit from

the enhancement measures. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following information of each of the existing valid outsourced service contracts of various public organisations, statutory bodies and subvented service organisations: (i) the industries involved (i.e. security, cleansing, property services and others), (ii) the number of non-skilled workers, (iii) the median hourly salary and (iv) the enhancement measures adopted (set out in the table below);

Public organisations/statutory bodies/subvented service organisations:

Outsourced service contractors	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Total				

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of cases in the past five years where outsourced service contractors of public organisations, statutory bodies and subvented service organisations were penalised for breaching the terms of employment contracts with non-skilled workers and failing to provide adequate labour protection, etc, as well as the details of the penalties; and

(3) whether the authorities have taken measures and actions to promote the adoption of the aforesaid enhancement measures by various public organisations, statutory bodies and subvented service organisations, as well as to introduce a monitoring mechanism for outsourced service contracts and a demerit point system for contractors; if so, of the details and the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with relevant bureaux and departments, our consolidated reply is as follows:

The Government has implemented a series of improvement measures in April 2019 and May 2023 respectively to further safeguard the rights and benefits of outsourced non-skilled workers in the procurement of services. The measures can be divided into three categories:

(a) Enhancing the tender evaluation system, including setting out the requirement that the technical weighting assigned to "wages" in marking schemes must be no less than 25 per cent, enhancing the technical assessment related to "environmental protection, social responsibility and governance", and requiring that tenderers must submit a "Heat Stroke Prevention Work Plan" in bidding for relevant contracts in order to strengthen protection of

occupational safety and health of non-skilled workers;

(b) Enhancing the remuneration of non-skilled workers, including providing eligible non-skilled workers and their supervisory staff with a gratuity set at 6 per cent of the total wages earned during the employment period, allowing non-skilled workers who have been employed under a continuous contract for no less than one month to enjoy the statutory holiday pay entitlement earlier than as stipulated under the Employment Ordinance, and paying non-skilled workers who are required to work when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is in force at least 150 per cent of the originally entitled wages; and

(c) Introducing a standardised regulatory framework to enhance the monitoring of non-skilled worker contracts.

Upon the launch of the two rounds of enhancement measures, we also invited all policy bureaux to encourage public organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under their purview to adopt the said improvement measures. Given the large number of these organisations, and that they have their own decision-making powers, we do not maintain information on their outsourced non-skilled worker contracts. We understand that some large-scale public organisations have also responded to the Government's appeal. For example:

(a) Hospital Authority has incorporated all of the above improvement measures into its outsourcing system involving non-skilled worker contracts;

(b) Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) has adopted most of the improvement measures introduced by the Government. In respect of tender evaluation system, AAHK has enhanced the technical assessment related to "environmental protection, social responsibility and governance" and included "Staff Welfare Plan" as part of its technical assessment, with some contractors proposing and implementing a series of additional welfare benefits for their staff, such as attendance allowance, transportation allowance and medical schemes. Besides, AAHK requires tenderers to provide a "Heat Stroke Prevention Work Plan" in order to protect the occupational safety and health of non-skilled workers. As regards enhancing the remuneration of non-skilled workers, AAHK has also adopted the Government's measures related to statutory holiday pay and typhoon pay, as well as strengthened its monitoring framework;

(c) Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) requires successful tenderers to conduct risk assessment and take effective precautions against heat stroke based on the assessment results. In monitoring the performance of its contractors, HKHS writes to remind them of updates on ordinances/regulations regarding the protection of workers' rights and benefits. It also carries out monthly checks of the documentary proof provided by its contractors, such as payroll and Mandatory Provident Fund contribution records, to ensure their compliance with the requirement of paying committed wages to workers. HKHS is conducting a review and planning to incorporate the Government's measures related to statutory holiday pay and typhoon pay into its tender documents from April 2025 onwards;

(d) Insurance Authority adopts most of the improvement measures introduced by the Government, including requiring contractors to provide additional gratuity, statutory holiday pay and typhoon pay for non-skilled workers, enhancing the technical assessment related to "environmental protection, social responsibility and governance", and strengthening its monitoring framework; and

(e) Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority also adopts the Government's measures related to provision of additional gratuity and statutory holiday pay, and enhances the technical assessment related to "environmental protection, social responsibility and governance". Moreover, tenderers who provide additional staff benefits such as bonus schemes and medical schemes for non-skilled workers will stand a chance of getting extra marks.

We will continue to invite all policy bureaux to encourage public organisations and NGOs under their purview to adopt the improvement measures to protect the rights and benefits of non-skilled workers.

LCQ16: Supporting local students to pursue further studies in Mainland

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

Regarding supporting local students to pursue further studies in the Mainland, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in relation to Hong Kong students pursuing further studies in the Mainland in each of the past three years and this year to date (set out in the table below): (i) the number of Hong Kong students studying in Mainland higher education institutions and research institutes, (ii) the number of applicants for the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS), (iii) the number of subsidy recipients under the MUSSS, (iv) the amount of subsidy involved in the MUSSS, (v) the number of applicants for the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions (the Admission Scheme), and (vi) the number of students admitted to Mainland institutions through the Admission Scheme;

Year	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)
2021						
.....						

2024 to date						
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(2) apart from organising large-scale Mainland Higher Education Expo every year, what regular measures are taken by the authorities to introduce secondary school students information about further studies in the Mainland and the MUSSS, and whether such introductions are made in life planning activities and relevant organisations are invited to hold seminars at schools; if so, of the number of hours and frequency of such activities in each of the past three years; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as some Hong Kong students pursuing further studies in the Mainland have relayed that they were unaware of the MUSSS and therefore did not apply for the subsidy, whether the authorities will step up publicity and promotion work on the MUSSS and conduct regular surveys on Hong Kong students to understand how much they know about pursuing further studies in the Mainland;

(4) as it is learnt that Hong Kong students may need accreditation of academic qualifications, no matter whether they return to Hong Kong or stay in the Mainland for development after graduation, but there are still difficulties in accreditation of academic qualifications in both Hong Kong and the Mainland, such as the requirement of a manual process for accreditation and registration of academic qualifications, which cannot be possible with the number as printed in the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents, as relayed by some Hong Kong students pursuing further studies in the Mainland, whether the authorities will consider negotiating with relevant Mainland authorities to speed up the procedures and processes for accreditation of academic qualifications in both Hong Kong and the Mainland and work towards "mutual recognition of registration of academic qualifications" between Hong Kong and the Mainland in the long term; and

(5) along with increase in the number of Hong Kong students pursuing further studies in the Mainland, whether the authorities have invested additional resources to support their needs and considered expanding the scope of the MUSSS to include postgraduate programmes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(1) The details of Hong Kong students pursuing further studies on the Mainland and of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS) in the past three years and up to now this year are tabulated below:

Academic year	No. of Hong Kong students studying in Mainland higher education institutions (1)	Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions		MUSSS		
		Total no. of applicants	Total no. of students admitted	Total no. of applicants	Total no. of student beneficiaries	Amount of subsidy disbursed (\$)
2021/22	18 430 (2)	4 783	2 266	4 901	4 422	56 million
2022/23	21 519 (3)	4 890	2 435	5 014	4 551	62 million
2023/24	23 317 (4)	4 262	2 077	5 142	4 601	63 million
2024/25	No latest figures available yet	4 562	2 340	No latest figures available yet (5)		

Notes:

(1) According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education, including the numbers of undergraduate and graduate students.

(2) As of January 2022

(3) As of December 2022

(4) As of December 2023

(5) Since the application period for the 2024/25 academic year just ended in September 2024, applications for this academic year are currently being processed, and the figures are not available yet.

(2) and (3) The Education Bureau (EDB) has been publicising and promoting the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions (Admission Scheme) and the MUSSS through multiple channels, including school circulars, press releases, the EDB's website, social media, newspaper advertisements and seminars. Every year, the EDB writes to principals of all local secondary schools to invite schools to participate in the School Principal Nomination Scheme under the Admission Scheme, to introduce the MUSSS to eligible students who plan to study on the Mainland, and distribute posters and leaflets of the MUSSS to secondary schools. In addition, the EDB organises life planning education seminars for senior secondary school students, teachers and parents every year to introduce the details of the Admission Scheme and the MUSSS, as well as the situation of studying on the Mainland. In the past three academic years (i.e., the 2021/22 to 2023/24 academic years), the EDB has organised a total of five related seminars for senior secondary school students, teachers and parents.

The EDB also provides secondary school students, teachers and parents with information on multiple career paths through the "Studies" section of the Life Planning Information Website, including reference materials such as the latest pathways further studies on the Mainland and information to note. The Handbook on the Admission Scheme provides detailed information on higher education institutions, details of funding schemes, sharing by students and graduates, etc. A new section, namely "The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area", was also added to the website in 2023 to introduce information on further education and career information in the Greater Bay Area cities.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the EDB organise the Mainland Higher Education Expo every year to provide detailed information on the Admission Scheme and the MUSSS, etc. The Expo has resourceful content and is well-received. The EDB also disseminates information related to the MUSSS to Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate programmes on the Mainland through the Mainland's higher education institutions every year.

(4) As we understand from the MoE, the Centre for Student Services and Development under the MoE is responsible for the management of the "China Higher Education Student Information" (CHSI) website. When students enrol at the Mainland's higher education institutions, the institutions will immediately register the student status on the CHSI, and the information regarding the student's academic qualifications and student status shall be consistent upon graduation. According to the information provided by the MoE, when registering students on the CHSI, the institutions can generally use different identity documents of the students (including the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents and the Residence Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents), and the same identity documents must also be used in enquiries about the students' academic qualifications in the future. If Hong Kong and Macao students encounter any difficulties when using other identity documents in enquiries, they can contact their own institutions for follow-up action.

(5) The EDB will continue to stay in touch with the Mainland authorities on their policies and arrangements for Hong Kong students pursuing studies on the Mainland, and render assistance as necessary. The EDB has also engaged an organisation to provide a series of employment support services for Hong Kong students pursuing studies on the Mainland, including the launch of the "Online Platform for Internship and Employment Information for Hong Kong Students Studying on the Mainland Higher Education Institutions" (www.ujobs-mainlandhe.hk) since mid-2017. The online platform provides a variety of information, including the latest developments and government policies in Hong Kong and on the Mainland, internship opportunities, employment guides and consultation services. In addition to providing online information, the organisation also invites corporations or organisations in Hong Kong and on the Mainland, professional bodies and Mainland institutions to provide information on the development of various trades and industries, job openings, and further studies, and organises activities relating to internship and employment. The above measures facilitate Hong Kong students pursuing studies on the Mainland to plan for their future after graduation. The Government will also continue to subsidise Hong Kong students aspiring to pursue further studies on the Mainland through the MUSSS. There is now no plan to expand the coverage of the MUSSS to cover postgraduate programmes.

LCQ10: Lantau Closed Road Permits

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hok-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

I have received complaints from residents of Lantau Island alleging that the requirement to apply for a Lantau Closed Road Permit (LCRP) before driving in and out of South Lantau imposes financial pressure on them. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the criteria adopted for delineating the closed area of South Lantau; whether it has regularly reviewed the policy on LCRPs; if so, of the time and outcome of the last review;

(2) of the following information on LCRPs and temporary LCRPs respectively for each of the past three years: (i) the numbers of usual residents and tourists who applied for LCRPs, and (ii) the administrative fees charged by the authorities to each category of such persons (set out in a table);

(3) given that an LCRP is currently required for access to the closed roads in South Lantau and the validity period of a long-term LCRP is one year, whether the Government will consider extending the validity period of LCRPs (to three years, for example) and waiving the LCRP application fees for Lantau residents; if not, of the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will explore cancelling LCRPs in phases to tie in with the future development of Lantau Island; if so, of the timetable; and

(5) as it has been reported that some companies in the community claim to be able to apply for LCRPs on behalf of non-Lantau residents and workers, whether the Government has conducted investigations and taken enforcement actions; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Development Bureau and the Transport Department (TD), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hok-fung is as follows:

To align with Hong Kong's long-term sustainable development, the Government established Sustainable Lantau Blueprint in 2017. Lantau will be developed based on the overarching principle of "Development in the North, Conservation for the South". North Lantau will become a platform for Hong Kong's economic development and will be developed as a new community. For South Lantau which has natural and cultural resources, the Government will focus on conservation to preserve and improve its unique environment of rural

villages. Besides, South Lantau will be used for recreational purpose, including the South Lantau Eco-recreation Corridor proposed earlier by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) for enjoyment by the residents and the visitors.

(1) Given the designation of South Lantau as a nature conservation area by the relevant government departments, the roads on South Lantau have been designated as 24-hour closed roads since the 1970s to control the number of vehicles entering South Lantau.

All vehicles travelling on the closed roads on Lantau are required to possess valid Lantau Closed Road Permits (LCRPs) issued by the TD, while drivers of the vehicles concerned are required to comply with the conditions stated in the LCRPs and the relevant approval letters.

The TD will review the LCRP application mechanism from time to time to ensure that the LCRPs are issued to persons with genuine needs. For example, the Government last reviewed and improved the application mechanism in January 2022, including abolishing the renewal arrangement for temporary LCRPs, requiring applicants for general LCRPs to provide proof of relationship with the holder of the address proof and the registered vehicle owner, and requiring applicants applying through the Land Registry records to provide additional proof.

(2) The number of LCRPs issued in the past three years is at Annex. Each permit is valid for a period not exceeding 12 months and the fee is \$900 per year or \$75 per month for first issue while the renewal fee is \$660 per year or \$55 per month (any part of a month would be counted as one month). The same fee level applies to general LCRPs, temporary LCRPs and the LCRPs issued under the "Driving on Lantau Island" Scheme (DLS). The above permit fees are set in accordance with the Government's general policy of charging fees on a cost-recovery basis. In vetting applications for LCRPs, in order to avoid abuse, the TD has to prudently verify a range of information and supporting documents (e.g. bills issued by power company or the Rating and Valuation Department, land search document issued by the Land Registry, or rental receipt together with the stamped tenancy agreement, etc as address proof for a resident in South Lantau), and hence more administrative procedures are involved.

(3) and (4) The Government has to ensure that the prevailing planning of preserving South Lantau as a nature conservation area and the capacities of the ancillary transport facilities will not be affected before issuing the LCRPs. Except for temporary LCRPs and LCRPs issued under the DLS, the TD will require address proof from applicants for general LCRPs to ensure that LCRPs are issued only to eligible South Lantau residents and those who have business operation in South Lantau. If the validity period of the LCRPs is extended to more than one year, there is greater chance that people or business operators who have moved out of South Lantau may still be able to drive freely in and out of South Lantau during the validity period, which is in contravention of the principle under which the LCRP was issued. As for the fee waiver, this involves a number of considerations, such as whether it is in conflict with the "user pays" principle, whether the fee waiver may give

rise to abuse and the possible impact on traffic, etc.

The TD reviewed the arrangements for relaxing the closed roads on Lantau and the arrangement of issuing LCRPs in 2015. In the light of the review findings and the views gauged during consultation, the TD has implemented the relevant measures by phases, including raising the maximum number of coaches entering South Lantau from 30 to 40 per day, and launching the DLS which allows 25 private cars to enter the closed roads on Lantau from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays). Private cars are allowed to travel via closed roads on Lantau to places such as Ngong Ping, Tai O, Cheung Sha and Mui Wo for leisure. Starting from July 2022, the daily quota for the DLS has increased from 25 to 50 (including 10 quotas for electric private cars).

At this stage, the Government has no plan to further adjust the arrangements for Lantau closed roads and the issuance of LCRPs. The Government will continue to review the arrangements in the light of the planning for South Lantau, the implementation of various enhancement measures, etc.

Considering the roads in South Lantau are currently closed roads which still have quite an extent of spare road capacities, there is insufficient justification from traffic flow perspective to support constructing large-scale transport infrastructure connecting North and South Lantau. However, Tung Chung Road is currently the only road connecting North and South Lantau, any serious traffic accidents will severely impact the external road traffic of the South Lantau. Therefore, the CEDD is conducting a study to explore options for improving the north-south connectivity of Lantau with a view to enhancing the resilience of the road network under emergency situations as well as benefiting the development of the South Lantau Eco-recreation Corridor under the overarching principle of "Conservation for the South". The study has commenced since March 2023 and is expected to complete in 2025.

(5) When examining each permit application, the TD has all along taken into account the genuine needs of the applicants to enter the closed roads in accordance with established criteria. The TD has also examined in detail whether the application submitted by the applicant complies with the requirements, the nature and justifications of the application, and the adequacy of supporting documents. If an applicant was found to have breached the permit conditions, including making a false declaration when applying for the LCRP, the TD would refer the case to the Police for follow-up action as appropriate.