

Secondary School Profiles 2024/2025 to be released on December 5

The following is issued on behalf of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation:

The Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) will release the online version (in Chinese and English) of the Secondary School Profiles 2024/2025 tomorrow (December 5). Primary schools will distribute printed copies of the Profiles to parents of Primary Six students of the current school year.

The Profiles cover basic information on more than 400 local secondary schools including school mission, school facilities, teaching staff information, class structure, subjects offered, student support as well as learning and teaching plan such as language policies. The information is provided and verified by individual schools, reflecting their status as at September 2024.

Apart from essential school information, the Profiles include a "Message from CHSC Chairman", which outlines the key points for choosing schools to help parents select a suitable school for their children.

Schools can update the online version of the Profiles whenever necessary, so that parents can obtain the latest school information.

The public can access the online version of the Profiles on the Secondary School Profiles webpage (www.chsc.hk/secondary/en). Printed copies will be available for public reference at District Offices, public libraries and Regional Education Offices of the Education Bureau (EDB).

For enquiries, please call the EDB's Regional Education Offices (Hong Kong: 2863 4646; Kowloon: 3698 4108; New Territories East: 2639 4876; and New Territories West: 2437 7272) or the CHSC Secretariat at 3698 4376.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 is 106.6 (same as yesterday's index).

[DH's operation "Thunderstone" combats illegal sale of alternative smoking products \(with photo\)](#)

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH) conducted an operation codenamed "Thunderstone" yesterday (December 3) against the illegal sale of alternative smoking products (ASPs). A batch of 1 200 suspected ASPs and a batch of 1 200 suspected dutiable cigarettes were seized during the operation.

Through in-depth investigations, officers of TACO yesterday conducted an operation by posing as customers to contact people suspected of selling ASPs illegally. In the operation, a batch of 1 200 suspected ASPs and a batch of 1 200 suspected dutiable cigarettes were seized. Officers initiated an investigation against two 35-year-old males for suspecting of selling ASPs and possessing ASPs for commercial purposes. Charges will be laid against offender(s) when sufficient evidence is found regarding the sale of ASPs. The DH will also refer the suspected violation of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) to the relevant enforcement department for investigation.

The Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) prohibits the promotion, manufacture, sale and possession for commercial purposes of ASPs. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the DH said that the department will continue to take stringent enforcement action. The spokesman also cautioned against the use of any ASPs and stressed that these products contain amounts of nicotine similar to those of conventional cigarettes in order to sustain addiction. In addition, health hazards of long-term exposure to these new products are unknown. The Government appeals to smokers to quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. They are encouraged to call the DH's Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline on 1833 183. The hotline is operated by registered nurses and provides professional counselling services on smoking cessation. Information on smoking cessation can also be obtained from www.livetobaccofree.hk.



LCQ15: Rents of shop premises under the Hong Kong Housing Authority

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Man-kwong and a written reply by Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) began to offer rent concessions to its eligible non-domestic tenants in October 2019, and the relevant measure ended at the end of last year. It is learnt that since the resumption of paying the original rents early this year, many tenants of shop premises chose to close down due to a plunge in their businesses, and many gave up renewing their tenancies as the rents remained unaffordable even with the offer of rent reductions during tenancy renewal negotiations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of shop premises in various housing estates under HA due for renewal and the proportion of successful renewals in the past six months, together with a breakdown by trade;
- (2) of the number and percentage of shop premises offered with rent reductions during tenancy renewal negotiations, the respective percentages of rent reductions offered to such shop premises, as well as the proportion of successful renewals in the past six months, together with a breakdown by trade;
- (3) of the number of shop premises in various housing estates under HA due for renewal in the coming six months;
- (4) of the basis or calculation mechanism adopted by HA for determining the rents of shop premises for tenancy renewal; and

(5) whether HA will consider formulating a rent adjustment mechanism to review and adjust the rents for shop premises with tenancies that have not been expired during economic downturn or when tenants meet with operating difficulties?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has sustained its attention to the leasing status of its commercial premises, and has been actively introducing different trades of goods and services to provide convenience to residents in shopping. As at end of September 2024, the overall vacancy rate of the HA's commercial premises was 3.95 per cent, which was relatively ideal compared with that of about 6.8 per cent in the private sector in the third quarter. In many of the HA's shopping centres, such as Ching Long Shopping Centre, On Tat Shopping Centre, JoysMark, and Ying Tung Shopping Centre, most of the commercial premises, if not all, have been leased out to provide residents with diversified shopping choices and services.

The HA adopts a comprehensive leasing strategy for letting its vacant commercial premises, including making marketing efforts and proactively approaching potential tenants from different trades that meet the needs of residents, with a view to introducing suitable trades to the estates. This diversification of tenants' trades enhances the chance of leasing out the vacant premises. Besides, the HA has established a hotline and posted QR codes at its shopping centres to provide leasing information on its commercial premises, allowing potential tenants from different trades to directly access tendering information. Recently, several commercial premises located at Shui Chuen O Shopping Centre, Hoi Lai Shopping Centre, and On Kay Commercial Centre have been successfully let out after such diversification of trades, reflecting the favourable effects of the above comprehensive leasing strategy.

In the past half year (i.e. the 6 months from April to September 2024), the HA successfully leased out around 130 commercial premises, reflecting the keen market demand for the HA's commercial premises. In fact, the HA's shopping centres, which offer a stable business environment and customer base, are consistently popular among tenants. The HA had recently invited tenders for the leasing of two vacant shops in Kai Long Court and Choi Ying Place, and 26 and 10 tenders were received respectively. Both shops have been successfully let out, and this reflected the strong interest from tenderers and their keen demand for the HA's premises. In addition, the HA has also launched the innovative "Well Being·Start-Up" Programme (the Programme) under its shopping centres, offering premises for free for seven months for young people to trial their business plans, with a view to encouraging and supporting them in pursuit of their entrepreneurial dreams. The Programme has been well received since its launch, with about 180 applications received. Currently, the selected 17 teams are operating in different shopping centres under the HA. We hope to leverage the vitality and innovative ideas of the youth to provide residents with a more diversified choice of products and

shopping experience, attract more visitors to the shopping centres and achieve a win-win situation for both residents and tenants.

The Housing Department's reply to the question raised by the Hon Leung Man-kwong is as follows:

(1) to (4) In the past half year (i.e. the 6 months from April to September 2024), over 250 tenants successfully renewed their tenancies, accounting for 82 per cent of the tenants whose tenancies were due for renewal. The breakdown of the shops concerned by trade type is set out below:

	Trade	Successful Renewal Cases
1	Food and Beverage	41
2	Merchandise Retails	116
3	Service Industries	96

In the coming half year (from December 2024 to May 2025), about 310 tenancies of shops under the HA will expire, and the HA is striving to liaise with each of the tenants on the tenancy renewal arrangements. In arranging for the renewal of shop tenancies, the HA will re-assess the rent for each case according to its prevailing market value with reference to the latest market situation and rental information of comparable lettings in the HA as well as the private property market. The HA will also take into account other relevant factors which affect rental values, such as the location, the trade in operation, as well as the size and pedestrian flow of the premises, etc. The HA will also liaise with tenants on the rent upon tenancy renewal in a pragmatic manner, with a view to reaching a consensus on the tenancy renewal as soon as possible so as to avoid bringing any inconvenience to residents.

(5) The HA lets out its commercial premises according to business principles, and assesses the rental amount based on the prevailing market value. In general, commercial premises are let out by way of invitation of tenders, and potential tenants submit bids based on their own business strategy. Once the tender is awarded, the successful tenderer is required to, throughout the tenancy period, pay monthly rent according to the tender submitted. While the HA understands the difficulty faced by tenants in times of economic downturn, it is necessary to uphold the fairness of the tendering system. It would be unfair to the unsuccessful tenderers if the tenant requests rent concession due to unexpected business situations or other reasons. To safeguard the fairness of the tendering system, the rent is therefore set to remain unchanged during the tenancy period. Nevertheless, the HA will re-assess the rental amount upon tenancy renewal based on the prevailing market value and liaise with the tenants in a pragmatic manner. Reasonable adjustments have been made to the rent for individual tenants upon re-assessment for tenancy renewal. Tenants may also approach their estate offices to express their views on and discuss the new rental amount for tenancy renewal. The HA will continue to keep in view the economic situation as well as relevant measures of the Government, and provide appropriate assistance to the HA's tenants

where necessary.

LCQ14: Promoting living and working in same district

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

There are views that unbalanced district development in the past has resulted in a large number of residents of New Territories districts having to travel across districts for employment, with some of them commuting for as long as three hours every day, and the increase in residents' travelling expenses and commuting time is not conducive to their physical and mental health as well as work-life balance. As regards promoting living and working in the same district, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics respectively on the home-job ratios and the proportions of residents taking up cross-district employment in the 18 districts across the territory;

(2) given the Government's replanning of Tuen Mun West Area (including Lung Kwu Tan) and development of the Northern Metropolis (including Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area), whether it has estimated to what level such development will raise the home-job ratios in the Tuen Mun District, Yuen Long District and North District;

(3) as the Government has indicated in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 that it will cease using coal for daily electricity generation by 2035, and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited has also indicated in the 2022 Sustainability Report that older coal-fired generation units at the Castle Peak A Power Station will be retired in the next few years, how the Government will make use of the site of the Castle Peak Power Station to raise the home-job ratio in the district; and

(4) of the current progress of the revitalisation and re-industrialisation of the industrial areas in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long; whether the relevant revitalisation measures will tie in with the development of new quality productive forces, and whether it has estimated the number of additional employment places that can be created?

Reply:

President,

In Hong Kong, industrial and commercial development in traditional urban areas is relatively more mature, leading to the concentration of more job positions in the urban areas of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. It remains commonplace that citizens residing in the New Territories need to commute to urban areas for work. In planning the long-term development of Hong Kong, it is one of our visions to improve home-job balance. To this end, in the final report of "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" (Hong Kong 2030+) promulgated in 2021, the Government proposed introducing more land for different types of economic use in New Development Areas (NDAs) such as the Northern Metropolis through strategic land use planning, with a view to fostering development of industries and creating job opportunities. We will also provide residential housing within such NDAs to bring jobs closer to homes, thereby reducing the commuting time and improving the quality of life for workers.

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

(1) According to the statistics of the Census and Statistics Department, as of mid-2023, approximately 55 per cent (around 1 900 000 persons) of the overall labour force of Hong Kong reside in the New Territories. However, only about 32 per cent (around 860 000 persons) of the employed persons in Hong Kong work in the New Territories. The figures on labour force and employed persons across 18 districts of Hong Kong are shown at Annex. The Government does not maintain data on how residents take up cross-district employment.

(2) As a direction set out in the final report of Hong Kong 2030+ mentioned above, the Government will strive to make available more industry sites and create more job opportunities in the course of taking forward the development of various NDAs in the New Territories. Taking the Northern Metropolis as an example, one of the development targets is to achieve "industry-driven planning and better home-job balance". The Government expects that around 500 000 new jobs will be created upon the completion of the whole Northern Metropolis. We believe the new job opportunities will help reduce the need for residents of the relevant districts to commute across districts for work and promote home-job balance. For instance, the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen NDA located in the western part of the Northern Metropolis, together with the Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long South NDA and Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai (Lau Fau Shan) areas, are positioned as the high-end professional services and logistics hub of the Northern Metropolis. NDAs not only could provide a considerable number of public and private housing units to address the current shortage of housing supply, but could also provide commercial and industry sites for development of finance, professional services and logistics services, etc., thereby facilitating economic development and job creation. On the other hand, new railway and major road infrastructure being planned in accordance with development of NDAs will also improve the overall traffic and commuting situation for residents.

In addition, we are conducting a planning and engineering study for Lung

Kwu Tan reclamation and the re-planning of Tuen Mun West area, with a view to developing high value-added economic industries such as high-end green technology industries, advanced construction industry and modern logistics parks. It is anticipated that new job opportunities will be created in Tuen Mun district, in turn further promoting home-job balance within the district. The study will also propose improvement measures based on the traffic demand of the proposed development, which include exploring the feasibility of widening Lung Mun Road which connects Lung Kwu Tan and Tuen Mun West areas to Tuen Mun town centre, and constructing a new road within the Lung Kwu Tan reclamation area, so as to improve the local and external transport connectivity for facilitating people who work within or outside the area. We plan to consult the relevant stakeholders on the land use proposals for this area in the first half of next year.

(3) The Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) states that the Government has announced in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 the target to cease using coal for daily electricity generation by 2035, and to achieve the long-term target of net-zero electricity generation before 2050. Three of the four coal-fired generation units at the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) Castle Peak A Power Station have already been retired in or before 2024, while the remaining coal-fired generation unit is expected to be repurposed for emergency backup or retired in the coming few years. The EEB understands that the CLP would start the demolition works as early as 2027 and thereafter the works are expected to be completed in phases within about five to six years. The Government will discuss the long-term arrangement for the site with the CLP in due course.

(4) The Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau indicates that the Government has put in place various measures to promote new industrialisation and to allow traditional manufacturing industries to upgrade and transform their operations through technology. These measures aim to enhance production efficiency, improve competitiveness of corporates, and inject new momentum into the development of Hong Kong's economy. On promotion of new-industrialisation, we expect that facilities such as light weight workshop and co-working space in the Microelectronics Centre in Yuen Long InnoPark, will be made available by end 2024 for tenants to move in gradually in a bid to promote the development of microelectronics.

The Development Bureau has all along encouraged the industry to revitalise old industrial buildings (IBs). The 2024 Policy Address has announced the extension of various measures under the Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings to the end of 2027, with a view to continuing to encourage redevelopment and conversion of aged IBs. Since the measures were rolled out in 2018, the Town Planning Board has approved a total of 71 applications for relaxation of plot ratio (up to 20 per cent) for redevelopment of IBs, including three cases with IBs situated in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts. Extension of the measures facilitates better utilisation of existing IBs in various districts and fosters economic development.