

CE sets out vision for green and high-quality liveable city

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, in the Policy Address titled "Building a Bright Future Together" today (October 6), set out her vision for Hong Kong to become a smart, vibrant, green and carbon-neutral city.

"Climate change represents both a challenge and an opportunity," Mrs Lam said.

"Hong Kong must put words into action in addressing the crisis of extreme weather brought by global climate change."

Mrs Lam said that, in the next 15 to 20 years, the Government will devote about \$240 billion to take forward various measures on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

To achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, the Chief Executive said the Government is set to unveil Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, and will establish an Office of Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality to oversee the effective implementation of measures on reducing carbon emissions.

About two-thirds of Hong Kong's greenhouse gas emissions come from electricity generation, 18 per cent from the transport sector and 7 per cent from waste, Mrs Lam said.

The Chief Executive highlighted the need to change the fuel mix of local power plants to achieve net-zero carbon emissions for electricity generation.

She said the Government's interim target was to cease using coal for daily electricity generation by 2035, while also promoting the use of green transport.

At the same time, the Government will promote green buildings, improve the energy efficiency of buildings and step up efforts to lead a low-carbon lifestyle and promote recycling.

"For enhanced synergy, I have asked the Environmental Protection Department to take over the management of refuse collection points and household refuse collection services from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, so as to bring the collection, recycling, delivery and treatment of waste under the same umbrella," Mrs Lam said.

The Chief Executive said the Government would "proactively promote the development of electric and other new energy public transport and commercial vehicles, including working with franchised bus companies to conduct trials of hydrogen fuel cell buses, with a view to formulating a specific roadmap and timetable for the use of new energy public transport in 2025".

With Smart Mobility being a key initiative in Hong Kong's smart city development strategy, a Free-Flow Tolling System at government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area will start coming into effect from the end of 2022, Mrs Lam said.

The Government will also promote the introduction of autonomous vehicles, including establishing a new regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles to enable wider, more flexible trial and use.

Since the launch of 5G services in Hong Kong last year, network coverage has now exceeded 90 per cent, rising to 99 per cent in core business districts.

"Through the Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Early Deployment of 5G, we will subsidise more sectors to boost efficiency and productivity by adopting innovative 5G applications such as telemedicine, distance maintenance support and real-time safety monitoring in construction sites," Mrs Lam said.

The Government has been enhancing the harbourfront on both sides of Victoria Harbour to make it more enjoyable and accessible to the public. Through the collaborative efforts of the Government and the Harbourfront Commission, the promenade will be extended to 25 kilometres along the harbour by the end of this year.

"We will adopt a completely fence-free stepped-down water edge design for the first time at the Victoria Harbour to enable visitors to sit by the sea and enjoy an unobstructed view of the beautiful Victoria Harbour," Mrs Lam said.

Taking forward the Invigorating Island South initiative, the Chief Executive highlighted various projects to enhance the connectivity and attractiveness of the area. These include a Green Link connecting MTR Wong Chuk Hang Station and Aberdeen Country Park, which will commence works next year.

Following Hong Kong's best ever performance at the Tokyo Olympic Games this year, as well as the commissioning of the new Kai Tak Sports Park in 2023, Mrs Lam said the Government would step up support for elite athletes and promote the development of the sports industry.

The flagship projects of the West Kowloon Cultural District, namely the M+ museum, the Hong Kong Palace Museum and the Lyric Theatre Complex, as well as the East Kowloon Cultural Centre and the Kai Tak Sports Park, which can also stage cultural performances, will be completed successively in the coming years.

"The vision of developing Hong Kong into a cultural metropolis will soon be realised. This will definitely offer a unique experience of the blend of Chinese and Western cultures and a fruitful cultural journey for locals and visitors," Mrs Lam said.

"Though Hong Kong still faces various issues, including a shortage of land for housing, traffic congestion and ageing buildings, these challenges

should not hinder our determination to build a quality living environment for our people."