

LCQ13: Statistics on New Territories small houses

Following is a question by the Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

According to the New Territories small house policy, a New Territories male indigenous villager over 18 years old is entitled to one concessionary grant during his lifetime to build one small house (small house concessionary right). Lands zoned for "Village Type Development" (V zone lands) are primarily reserved for development of small houses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of holders of unexercised small house concessionary right as at June 30 this year, and among them, (i) the number of those who had never lodged applications for building small houses and (ii) the number of those who were at the time residing abroad; the estimated number of those who might have the intention to lodge such applications in the coming decade; if such figures are not available, whether it will compile such statistics;

(2) of (i) the number of holders of unexercised small house concessionary right, and (ii) the respective numbers of applications for building small houses which were (a) received, (b) approved, (c) being processed and (d) rejected, by the Lands Department, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 1);

Table 1

Year	(i)	(ii)			
		(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
2008					
...					
2017					
Total					

(3) of the respective numbers of small houses which were (i) under construction and (ii) completed, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 2);

Table 2

Year	(i)	(ii)
2008		
...		
2017		
Total		

(4) (i) in respect of V zone lands, of (a) their total area, (b) the total area of those on which small houses had been built, and (c) the total area of those available for small house development, as well as (ii) the total area of sites zoned for other planning uses and on which small houses had been built, in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 3); and

Table 3

Year	(i)			(ii)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	
2008				
...				
2017				
Total				

(5) of (i) the number of approved applications for premium assessment and (ii) the number of cases of transfer of titles, in respect of small houses in each of the past 10 years (set out in Table 4)?

Table 4

Year	(i)	(ii)
2008		
...		
2017		
Total		

Reply:

President,

The Small House Policy has been implemented since 1972. Under the Policy, in general, a male indigenous villager aged 18 years old or above who is descended through the male line from a resident in 1898 of a recognised village in the New Territories may apply to the Government once during his lifetime for permission to build for himself a small house on a suitable site

within his own village.

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

(1) The Lands Department (LandsD) does not have statistics on the number of indigenous villagers in the New Territories nor the number of those eligible for applying for small house grants.

The demand for small houses may change with factors such as the birth and growth of indigenous villagers, and whether or not an indigenous villager will apply for a small house grant depends on his own circumstances and wishes, while not all eligible indigenous villagers aged 18 years old or above will submit an application. Therefore, the Government does not project the number of small house applications in the next 10 years.

(2) As mentioned in (1) above, LandsD does not have statistics on the number of indigenous villagers in the New Territories nor the number of those eligible for applying for small house grants.

A breakdown in the numbers of small house applications received, approved, rejected and being processed by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

Year	Number of small house applications received	Number of small house applications approved
2008	1 810	958
2009	1 769	1 290
2010	1 959	1 474
2011	2 374	1 041
2012	2 690	1 121
2013	2 566	1 011
2014	2 522	1 114
2015	2 547	989
2016	1 297	858
2017	1 129	818
Total	20 663	10 674

Note: Due to the variations in time required for processing individual small house application, the applications approved, rejected and being processed during the year may not correspond with the applications received during the year.

(3) LandsD does not have statistics on the number of small houses under construction each year.

The number of small houses completed with Certificates of Compliance

(CCs) issued by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

Year	Number of small houses completed with CCs issued
2008	920
2009	847
2010	973
2011	812
2012	1 089
2013	1 151
2014	1 066
2015	904
2016	814
2017	799
Total	9 375

(4) Village Type Development (V) zones in existing statutory plans mainly reflect areas of recognised villages of indigenous villagers in the New Territories, and are for small house development by indigenous villagers. The purpose of setting up V zones is to concentrate village type developments therein for more orderly development. V zones are drawn up having regard to a series of planning factors, including the location of existing villages, the delineation of Village Environs, the local topography, the existing settlement pattern, site characteristics and the surrounding environment, environmental constraints, as well as the projections of demand for small houses of that area in the coming 10 years provided by relevant village representatives. As at December 31 of each of the past 10 years, the total land area of V zones is as follows:

Year	Total land area of V zones (hectares) (about)
2008	3 154
2009	3 155
2010	3 260
2011	3 286
2012	3 294
2013	3 321
2014	3 338
2015	3 338
2016	3 368
2017	3 377

Increase in the land zoned V mainly reflects existing villages

previously not yet covered by any statutory plans.

Land under V zones on statutory plans is scattered across the territory and covers existing and recognised villages in the New Territories. Many small houses are built on land under private ownership, and the size of individual pieces of private land varies. In addition, whether the development of small house may indeed proceed on a particular site within the V zone would depend on the fulfillment of engineering and other conditions as required. As such, the Government does not have readily available information on the total area of land available for small house developments in these V zones.

Under the existing policy, each small house can have a roofed-over area of not exceeding 65.03 square metres. However, the area of land granted for a small house is subject to such constraints as the topography, condition and area of the small house site under application. As such, the area of land granted for individual small house development may vary from case to case. LandsD has no readily available statistics on the area of land on which small houses had been built (regardless of the zoning of land for various planning uses).

(5) In accordance with the existing policy, alienation of small houses before the issue of CCs is generally prohibited. If, after approval of his application and completion of a small house, a small house applicant intends to transfer ownership of his small house, he is required under the applicable alienation restriction to make an application to LandsD. If the application is approved, he is required to pay the necessary land premium. The number of approved cases for removal of alienation restriction by LandsD in the past 10 years is set out below.

Year	Number of approved cases for removal of restriction on alienation
2008	494
2009	474
2010	454
2011	493
2012	404
2013	485
2014	577
2015	462
2016	409
2017	435
Total	4 687

Since a small house applicant may transfer the ownership of his small house after LandsD's approval for his application for removing the applicable alienation restriction and his payment of the necessary land premium, and the

transfer of ownership concerned is a private transaction of the small house applicant, LandsD does not have statistics on the number of small houses transacted.