

LCQ13: Supplying flushing water and connecting public sewers to the villages in the New Territories

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 13):

Question:

On supplying flushing water and connecting public sewers to the villages in the New Territories, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) in respect of those villages in the New Territories which are currently using fresh water for toilet flushing, of the (i) number of such villages and (ii) number of residents therein, as well as the quantity of water used for toilet flushing by such villages in each of the past three years, with breakdowns by District Council district; if the relevant information is unavailable, whether it will collect such information;

(2) whether it has plans to supply the villages mentioned in (1) with reclaimed water for toilet flushing; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) given that upon the completion of the North East New Territories Sewerage System Upgrade project proposed by the Government, the trunk sewers of the system will have sufficient capacity to cover those villages in the area which are not connected to the public sewerage system, whether the Government has plans to include the works for connecting the trunk sewers to such villages in the scope of the said project; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted relevant departments, I provide my responses to the three parts of the question raised by Hon Chan as follows:

(1) Currently, villages in the New Territories using fresh water for flushing are mainly located in the Yuen Long, North, Tai Po, Islands, Sai Kung and Tuen Mun District Council districts. In the past three years, the villagers' consumption of fresh water for flushing in these districts is provided as follows:

District	Year	Consumption of fresh water for flushing (million cubic metres)	Approximate no. of villages using fresh water for flushing
Yuen Long	2016-17	0.9	150
	2017-18	1.1	
	2018-19	1.3	
North	2016-17	0.7	100
	2017-18	0.8	
	2018-19	0.9	
Tai Po	2016-17	0.4	90
	2017-18	0.4	
	2018-19	0.5	
Islands	2016-17	0.4	70
	2017-18	0.5	
	2018-19	0.5	
Sai Kung	2016-17	0.2	60
	2017-18	0.2	
	2018-19	0.2	
Tuen Mun	2016-17	0.3	20
	2017-18	0.3	
	2018-19	0.3	

As it takes time to collect statistics on the number of residents in these villages, the relevant information cannot be provided before the deadline for the reply.

(2) As the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works will be upgraded to an effluent polishing plant (EPP) by adopting tertiary treatment, we will further process the tertiary treated effluent from the EPP to produce reclaimed water for supply to the northeast New Territories in phases from 2022 onwards for flushing and other non-potable uses. Besides, there are no plans to supply reclaimed water to other districts at this stage.

For villages located within the reclaimed water supply network, we will lay reclaimed water mains to supply reclaimed water to these villages for flushing purpose whenever technically feasible and cost-effective. However, since some villages are situated far from the reclaimed water supply network, supplying reclaimed water to these remote villages for flushing purpose will not be cost-effective.

We will continue to review and expand the supply of reclaimed water to those areas still being supplied with fresh water for flushing whenever technically feasible and cost-effective to further save fresh water resources.

(3) At present, the North East New Territories Sewerage System is serving many villages and is operating near its full capacity. There is an urgent need to upgrade the trunk sewer to provide capacity for connection from more villages and new facilities. We have completed the detailed design and many aspects of preparatory work for the upgrading project, with a view to submitting funding application to the Legislative Council for commencing the relevant works to timely benefit more citizens. Therefore, it is not appropriate at this stage to incorporate village sewerage projects that are yet to be studied into the project scope of the trunk sewer upgrade.