

## LCQ14: Implementation of development projects

Following is a question by the Hon Wilson Or and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (October 20):

Question:

To expedite the supply of housing, the Development Bureau set up in December last year a Development Projects Facilitation Office (DPFO) to follow up the development approval applications (including those relating to planning, lease modification/land exchange, as well as building plan and building consent) leading up to the commencement of works for larger-scale private residential development projects (i.e. those providing 500 residential units or more), so as to ensure a smooth vetting and approval process. Regarding the implementation of development projects, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the follow-up work of DPFO in respect of each type of development approval applications as at September 30 this year, including the (i) number of cases followed up, (ii) number of cases the vetting and approval process of which was completed, (iii) average processing time for cases the vetting and approval process of which was completed, and (iv) total number of units that can be provided by the development projects concerned (set out such information in the table below);

Type of applications	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
(a) Planning				
(b) Lease modification/land exchange				
(c) Building plan and building consent				

(2) whether it has compared the processing time mentioned in (1) with the processing time for the relevant applications in the eight months before DPFO was set up; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will immediately do so; and

(3) given that the former Territory Development Department (which has become the present Civil Engineering and Development Department after merging with the former Civil Engineering Department) used to draw up, on a yearly basis, 10-year development programmes for the various districts, and revise the programmes in the light of the progress of works, progress in resolving land acquisition and clearance problems, progress of engineering and landscape studies as well as changes in expenditure priorities, but it is learnt that the Government has not carried out such work since 2003, whether the

Government will consider formulating afresh 10-year development programmes for various districts; if so, of the details; if not, whether this is because the current practice is more desirable; if so, of the justifications for that?

Reply:

President,

Private development projects play a considerable role in meeting housing needs of the society. To this end, the Development Projects Facilitation Office (DPFO) was established under the Development Bureau in December 2020 to track relevant departments' processing of planning, lease modification and building plan applications, etc. for large-scale private residential development projects (providing a flat yield of 500 or more) leading up to the commencement of works. The purpose is to ensure smooth processing of development applications in order to avoid unnecessary delays and expedite housing supply.

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

(1) & (2) Each development project in general involves different stages such as land use planning, lease modification and preparation of building plans. As such, the projects tracked by DPFO would go through and complete different stages in different timeframe. Presenting the relevant statistics in the form of a table as suggested in the question might cause doubling-counting and confusion. We hope that the information provided below would help the public understand the situation.

Since the establishment of DPFO up to September this year, among the private residential development projects tracked by DPFO, 28 applications have obtained the relevant planning, lease modification/land exchange or building plans approvals. The relevant development projects are at different stages and involve a total of 42 500 residential units. DPFO is currently tracking 42 development applications for large-scale private residential development projects, including 13 planning applications, 22 lease modification/land exchange applications and 7 building plans related applications.

As the complexities and issues faced by applications for different development projects vary, it is thus not appropriate to make direct comparisons of the processing time required by different projects. That said, DPFO would proactively track the projects concerned and closely liaise with relevant bureaux/departments involved to ensure issues hindering the smooth processing of applications are resolved expeditiously.

(3) The Civil Engineering and Development Department was established in 2004 by merging the former Civil Engineering Department and the former Territory Development Department, and has been spearheading various developments and infrastructure projects across the territory (including New Development Areas) according to the Capital Works Programme. To ensure proper use of public resources when formulating the relevant funding allocation

arrangements under the annual Capital Works Resource Allocation Exercise, the Government considers the justifications, urgency, and technical feasibility of individual projects, as well as the Government's overall financial capability and the priorities accorded by bureaux and departments under their policy areas in a holistic manner. As always, the Government attaches importance to how the public works projects are being taken forward. According to the established mechanism, works departments monitor the project delivery at all stages to keep abreast of the latest progress and identify challenges or potential problems based on the projects' unique nature and site conditions, etc. such that countermeasures could be formulated in time to ensure the quality of works, as well as to enhance the safety level of construction and ensure projects are completed on time and within budget. The above mechanism is considered effective and will continue to be used.