

# LCQ15: Private land suitable for public housing development

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 (March 24):

Question:

In the 2019 Policy Address, the Chief Executive (CE) put forward proposals "to adopt a more focused approach for rezoning private land for public housing development, and then exercising public power to resume private land for public purpose, [which] is indeed a breakthrough in thinking", and "to resume private land which is zoned for high-density housing development in [the] statutory outline zoning plans [of various districts] but without any development plans due to various reasons (e.g. fragmented ownership, infrastructural constraints) and assessed to be suitable for public housing development". Furthermore, on October 20, 2019, the Secretary for Development (SDEV) mentioned in his blog entitled "My Blog" that "[a]part from brownfield sites in the New Territories, we will also review the land suitable to be zoned as Comprehensive Development Area or Residential (Group A) development with higher plot ratio ... and with relatively low-rise existing structures ... and that the owner(s) has no concrete development plan. Based on the information available, around ten land parcels that meet such criteria have been identified ... We hope we could make public our preliminary views on which of these sites are suitable for public housing development by the middle of next year". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the "private land which is ... assessed to be suitable for public housing development" mentioned by CE in the 2019 Policy Address is in fact the "ten land parcels" mentioned by the SDEV in the aforesaid "My Blog"; if so, why the Government did not "make public [its] preliminary views" in the middle of 2020 as pledged;

(2) of the respective locations, areas and existing uses of the sites involved in the "ten land parcels"; among such sites, the number of those which have finally been assessed to be suitable for public housing development; whether the Government will rezone those sites that are considered unsuitable for public housing development for other public uses (e.g. subsidised residential care homes for the elderly);

(3) as CE stated in the 2020 Policy Address that "as proposed in last year's Policy Address, the [Development Bureau] has reviewed private land zoned for high-density housing development but without any specific development plan, and assessed whether any such land is suitable for public housing development. It is expected that the related work will be completed by the end of this year", whether such work was completed at the end of 2020 as planned; if so, of the number of pieces, area and other details of the

private lands that have been confirmed to be suitable for public housing development; and

(4) of the number of pieces of private lands, excluding the private lands in the planned new development areas, for which the Government commenced, within the 36 months before and the 12 months after the publication of the 2019 Policy Address, studies on the rezoning of land use for public housing development, and the total area of such lands?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Wilson Or's question is as follows:

(1) to (3) The Chief Executive announced in her 2019 Policy Address to intensify Government-led planning efforts, including invoking the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap. 124) (LRO) and other applicable ordinances to resume the private land involved for development of public housing and related facilities. Along this direction, the Government has intensified its efforts to expedite development projects, significantly increasing the extent and pace of land resumption. In just 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Government has resumed around 90 hectares (ha) of land (including around 80 ha of land for New Development Areas (NDA) and public housing development), which is much more than the 20 ha resumed over the immediate past five years. Looking ahead, about 700 ha of land (including more than 600 ha of land for NDA and public housing development) will be resumed from 2021-22, of which around 500 ha of land (including around 400 ha for NDA and public housing development) is expected to be resumed in the next five years (i.e. from 2021-22 to 2025-26).

Following the aforementioned direction to intensify efforts on land resumption, one of the measures announced in the 2019 Policy Address is to review private land which is zoned for high-density housing development in statutory outline zoning plans, but without any development plans yet due to various reasons (e.g. fragmented ownership or infrastructural constraints), and assess their suitability for public housing development.

To this end, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has identified ten land parcels for such review. Specifically, these ten land parcels have been zoned as "Comprehensive Development Area" or "Residential (Group A)" with a higher plot ratio (generally speaking, at 7.5 or above in the urban area and at 5 or above in the New Territories), and with relatively low-rise existing structures (say, only a few storeys).

We would assess whether the land parcels are suitable for high density public housing development taking into account the actual circumstances of each land parcel. Such considerations include the overall planning of the community concerned; community facilities and infrastructure (for example, traffic, water supply and drainage facilities) available in the area; the location, size, development parameters and existing uses of the land parcels;

as well as any development plan of the land owner. If the land parcel assessed to be suitable for public housing development involved private land, the Government would resume the relevant land by invoking the LRO in accordance with the existing mechanism.

The DEVB is close to completing the said review and will announce the review results in due course. As the said review may relate to potential resumption of private land and compensation, it is not appropriate to disclose information on the specific locations and details of the relevant land parcels at this stage so as to avoid market speculation and unnecessary concerns of the existing users.

(4) Apart from the rezoning work in relation to NDA, we commenced rezoning for a total of 30 sites involving public housing development within the 36 months before and the 12 months after the announcement of the 2019 Policy Address (i.e. from October 2016 to September 2020). The total area of land involved is about 73.32 ha. The rezoning work may involve both government and private land and the breakdown of each is not readily available at this moment.