

LCQ20: Optimal use of government and private sites

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse, and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (November 6):

Question:

The Government has indicated in this year's Policy Address that it will review over 300 "Government, Institution or Community" sites with a total area of some 300 hectares currently earmarked for standalone public facility, and put forward concrete proposals for sites with no development plan, including developing multi-purpose public facility buildings under a "single site, multiple use" model, developing residential projects and public facilities under a mixed development mode, etc. The Government will also assist non-governmental organisations in optimising their under-utilised sites, and facilitate, by providing support and introducing mixed residential, education and welfare uses, the redevelopment of the low-rise buildings on such sites by the organisations concerned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of each of the aforesaid over 300 sites, including the (i) location, (ii) area, (iii) existing use, and (iv) policy bureau or government department by which it is currently managed; regarding those sites which are currently left idle or put to temporary/short-term uses, since when they have been in their present status;

(2) of the timetable for the aforesaid review, and whether persons from the relevant professions other than those in the Government will participate in it;

(3) in cases where the public facilities involved in the sites that are intended to be developed under the "single site, multiple use" model are provided by more than one policy bureau or government department, which policy bureau or government department will be responsible for the relevant coordination work; and

(4) whether it will consider providing incentives to non-governmental organisations so as to encourage them to redevelop their low-rise buildings; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

A reply to the Hon Tony Tse's question is as follows:

(1) Amongst the over 300 "Government, Institution or Community" (GIC) sites

involving a total area of more than 300 hectares earmarked for standalone public facilities mentioned in the Policy Address, more than 80 per cent of these sites are located in rural and new town, with the remaining in different districts within Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. The site area varies, with about 30 per cent of the sites occupying 3 000 square metre of land or less, about 40 per cent of the sites occupying 3 001-10 000 square metres, and the remaining 30 per cent occupying more than 10 000 square metres. For the sites with relatively large site area, they are mainly reserved for large-scale public facilities, such as sewage treatment works, service reservoir, water treatment works, desalination plant and district cooling system. In these some 300 hectares of land, about 120 hectares have been, where practicable and appropriate, used for temporary purposes including car parks under short term tenancies or site offices for public works projects, before the earmarked GIC facilities are implemented. The remaining 200 hectares of land not arranged for temporary uses mostly involve private land, slopes or vegetated unformed land. More details on the over 300 sites could be provided after have confirmed with concerned bureaux/departments and if necessary, conducted site visits.

(2) Having regard to such factors as location, site area, surrounding environment and compatibility, do not expect that all over 300 sites have the potential for joint user development, such as those reserved for hospitals, columbaria, reservoirs and sewage treatment facilities involving more than 100 hectares of land as the nature of these facilities may not be suitable for co-location with other facilities at the same site. Therefore, will give priority to reviewing sites with greater potential of joint user development, including those reserved for schools/education, social welfare, public transport interchange, cultural and recreational facilities, which take up about half of the over 300 hectares. Developing such sites under the "single site, multiple use" model or mixed development mode will be explored. We will make our best effort to complete the review of the priority sites by mid-2021. The review exercise will be led by the Planning Department, with assistance from concerned bureaux/departments.

(3) Under the "single site, multiple use" model, the Government Property Agency will take up the role of central co-ordinator for projects involving considerable cross-department co-ordination, including identifying appropriate joint-user facilities with reference to local needs, co-ordination and resolution of different views among concerned departments, co-ordination of the priority of funding/programme, taking the lead in seeking the funding within the Government, and soliciting support from the local communities and the Legislative Council to the projects.

(4) The Government will invite the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) to, having regard to its experience of providing facilitating services to private building owners, offer consultancy and facilitating services to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The preliminary plan is that NGOs intending to redevelop community facilities on their sites and to take the redevelopment opportunity to introduce mixed residential, education and welfare uses under the "single site, multiple use" model may put forward their proposals to the URA under a new mechanism. The URA will act as a consultant

by conducting a preliminary assessment of the development potential of the subject site (e.g. whether the plot ratio has been fully utilised), examining whether there are other redevelopment projects in the vicinity that may create synergy with NGO's redevelopment, and co-ordinating comments of relevant government departments, and then put forward possible redevelopment options to the NGO for consideration. The implementation details of the mechanism (e.g. commencement date for receiving applications, how to set priorities and the amount of consultancy fee, etc.) would be further considered by the URA.