

LCQ20: Planning and development of Kowloon City district

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (February 26):

Question:

On matters relating to the planning and development of the Kowloon City district, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of private buildings in the district, with a breakdown by the age group to which the buildings belong (i.e. 20 years or below, 21 to 40 years, and 41 years or above);

(2) of the number of buildings in the district that have participated in the various Government-led building rehabilitation schemes, as well as the measures in place to encourage owners of the remaining buildings to participate in the relevant schemes and to provide them with the assistance needed;

(3) of the number of government buildings in the district, and set out, by name of building, the years of commissioning of such buildings, the public services provided, as well as the utilisation rate of each service, in each of the past five years; whether it has plans to redevelop such buildings; if so, of the details;

(4) of the number of applications received in each of the past three years by the Government from developers for redeveloping or converting the residential buildings in the district, as well as the number of residential flats to be built in respect of each application; and

(5) of the latest progress of the plan to redevelop the old Kowloon City district?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the five-part question is as follows:

(1) According to the records of the Buildings Department (BD), as at end 2019, the numbers of private buildings (including buildings for various types of use) in Kowloon City District aged 20 years or below, 21 to 40 years and 41 years or above are tabulated below:

Building Age	Number of Buildings
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20 years or below	586
21 to 40 years	887
41 years or above	2 050

(2) As at January 2020, the number of cases in the Kowloon City District that have participated in Government-led assistance and loan schemes relating to building safety and rehabilitation are as follows (Note: Individual buildings can benefit from multiple schemes):

Government-led assistance and loan schemes relating to building safety and rehabilitation	Number of cases
Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0)	147 buildings (Note 1)
Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS)	194 buildings
Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme (LIMSS)	175 lifts
Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners (BMGSEO)	2 248 applications
Mandatory Building Inspection Subsidy Scheme	286 buildings
Building Safety Loan Scheme	630 buildings
Operation Building Bright (OBB)	603 buildings (Note 2)

Note 1: The figure includes 79 buildings approved for Category 1 and 68 buildings selected as Category 2 of OBB 2.0 (Note 3).

Note 2: OBB was launched in 2009 and its application already closed in 2010.

Note 3: Category 1 buildings cover those whose owners are prepared to take up the organisation of the prescribed inspection and repair works for at least the common parts of their buildings with a view to complying with the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) requirements. Category 2 buildings cover those which have outstanding MBIS notice(s) but the owners concerned have difficulties in coordinating the prescribed inspection and repair works for the common parts of the buildings. The BD will select Category 2 buildings proactively on risk basis for exercising BD's statutory power to hire consultants and contractors to carry out the required works in default of the owners concerned, and recover the costs incurred from the owners. Eligible owners may seek to cover all or part of the costs incurred by claiming subsidies available to them under OBB 2.0.

In October 2019, the Government announced funding injections for

enhancement of OBB 2.0, FSWS, LIMSS and BMGSEO to benefit more owners. The details are listed in Annex I.

To encourage more owners to participate in these schemes, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) will continue to carry out a series of publicity activities through different channels, including:

- (a) various media channels, such as advertisements on the television and radio, bus, newspaper, etc., according to different schemes and target beneficiaries;
- (b) issuing letters to target building owners to promote the schemes and inviting them to attend district briefings on the schemes;
- (c) organising briefing sessions for District Councils and reaching out to the public through District Councillor's offices;
- (d) partnering with non-governmental-organisations in different districts to introduce details relating to the schemes to owners of target buildings in the district and providing assistance in making applications; and
- (e) providing a "Building Rehabilitation Platform" website and hotline for owners to enquire details of the schemes.

(3) After consulting the relevant policy bureaux/ government departments, the information on Government buildings in Kowloon City District, the years of commissioning of the buildings and the public services provided are set out in Annex II. Amongst them, the Government has concrete plans to redevelop the Kowloon Animal Management Centre and two former schools (ex-premises of Kowloon Docks Memorial Primary School and ex-Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (Kowloon Tong)). Relevant information is also set out in Annex II.

As the compilation of the utilisation rate of various departmental facilities involves an extensive review of vast amount of information, we are unable to provide the relevant information within limited time.

(4) For development projects (including redevelopment projects) carried out by land owners/ developers, approval of building plans must be obtained from the Building Authority in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) (BO). Besides, land owners/ developers have to obtain approval of demolition plan and demolition consent from the Building Authority before the commencement of any demolition works in accordance with the requirements of the BO, if the development project involves the demolition of existing buildings. Currently, summary information on new building plans approved in each month (except amendment plans) including the addresses of the development projects, types of new buildings, total gross floor areas for domestic or/and non-domestic uses, occupation permits already obtained from the BD (including the numbers of domestic units upon completion) and sites with demolition consents issued of all private development projects are set out in the Monthly Digest of the BD and uploaded to the BD website (www.bd.gov.hk/en/whats-new/monthly-digests/index.html) for public

inspection. Members of the public may also request to inspect and copy the approved plans of individual private development projects of which occupation permits have been issued.

The release of information aims at providing information contained in approved building plans and it does not contain records as to whether the projects involved are redevelopment projects or any relevant information of the original buildings.

(5) In 2011, the Government revised the Urban Renewal Strategy and subsequently established the District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF) in Kowloon City to strengthen the urban renewal planning at district level. DURF advises the Government on district-based urban renewal initiatives from a holistic and integrated perspective, including tendering advice on regeneration and redevelopment areas, preservation targets and implementation models.

In 2014, DURF submitted the Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City (the Renewal Plan) to the Secretary for Development. The Renewal Plan is a document available for reference by members of the public and different organisations (including developers, the URA and property owners). Apart from the Government, these stakeholders or organisations may also participate in the implementation of the Renewal Plan. The document can be perused through the following link: www.durf.org.hk/pdf/Urban%20Renewal%20Plan_en.pdf.

The Government and the URA have been vigorous in implementing appropriate proposals under the Renewal Plan as far as practicable. For instance, the URA has commenced six redevelopment projects in To Kwa Wan under a district-based approach since 2016 in order to improve the local road network and streetscape in a comprehensive manner; strengthen street vibrancy; and retain local characteristics of small on-street shops. In addition, the Kai Tak Road/Sa Po Road project commenced in early 2019 will create a node between the Kai Tak Development Area and Kowloon City District through a proposed sunken plaza connecting the project to the Kai Tak underground shopping street.

In its future urban renewal initiatives, the URA will put an emphasis on studies and prior comprehensive planning before determining the priorities for implementation of urban renewal projects, with a view to improving the living conditions of old districts and enhancing the planning benefits for the community more effectively. The URA will also continue to consider appropriate proposals under the Renewal Plan for implementing urban renewal works in Kowloon City District.