

## LCQ20: Revitalising air-raid shelters

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (January 22):

Question:

There are views that air-raid shelters are important relics of the War of Resistance in Hong Kong, and are vivid materials for cultivating the spirit of patriotism and developing characteristic tourism. However, air-raid shelters and related military corridors in Hong Kong have all along not been put to good use. On the other hand, there are many successful cases in the Mainland (e.g. Chongqing and Sichuan) and overseas countries (e.g. the United Kingdom and Germany) where air-raid shelters have been revitalised into tourist attractions to fulfil their historical and educational functions, which are worthy of the Government's reference. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on all the air-raid shelters in Hong Kong: (i) the location, (ii) the area, (iii) the government department responsible for their management, (iv) the current use and (v) the revitalisation status (set out in the table below);

Name of air-raid shelter	(i)	.....	(v)

(2) as the Government indicated in its reply to a supplementary question raised by a Member of this Council on June 7, 2023 that it would gradually investigate the situation of air-raid shelters, of the current progress and outcome of the investigation;

(3) as there are views pointing out that despite the historical and cultural value of air-raid shelters, the Antiquities Advisory Board has included some air-raid tunnels in the "List of Items Not Falling Under the Usual Category of Buildings/Structures" for which grading assessment and study will not be conducted, while the Antiquities and Monuments Office has not included air-raid shelters in the "List of Government Historic Sites" list, whether the Government will consider conducting studies and assessments of air-raid shelters in order to administratively establish their historical and cultural value, thereby promoting their revitalised use; whether the Government currently has a mechanism in place to assess the revitalisation potential of air-raid shelters (e.g. the necessary conditions for revitalising air-raid shelters, the necessary assessment procedures, and the responsible government departments);

(4) whether it has assessed the effectiveness of the revitalisation of the eight air-raid shelters at Deep Water Bay Drive, Shouson Hill, into a wine

cellar and clubhouse restaurant, including whether the social and economic benefits generated following the revitalisation have achieved the expected results; and

(5) as there are views pointing out that in addition to the revitalisation of air-raid shelters into wine cellars and clubhouse restaurants, revitalising them into museums, bookstores, cultural experience centres, etc, is also a common revitalisation approach in the Mainland and overseas countries, whether the Government will make reference to these successful cases to formulate the air-raid shelter revitalisation plan for Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Lands Department (LandsD) and the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), our reply to the question raised by the Hon Stanley Ng is as follows:

(1) The CEDD has carried out a basic investigation to the known disused air-raid tunnels in Hong Kong. According to the records, there are currently 26 disused air-raid tunnels in Hong Kong, details of which are set out at Annex.

(2) and (3) Air-raid tunnels bear witness to Hong Kong's wartime history. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) is gathering information and will conduct research in due course. Subject to the research results, the AMO will consider including air-raid tunnels with higher historic and heritage value as "Government Historic Sites" for relevant departments' reference in assessing their potential for re-use. The AMO will also take photo records of the conditions of the air-raid tunnels, so that the public can learn more about them through the images.

(4) According to the information provided by the LandsD, the eight bunkers at Deep Water Bay Drive in Shouson Hill have been leased to Crown Wine Cellars Limited on short-term tenancies since 2003, primarily for operating a private wine club and storage of wine for members of the club. Although the Department does not maintain the statistics, the general impression is that in addition to serving as a wine cellar and club, this unique site also attracts visits from citizens and tourists.

(5) Disused air-raid tunnels are generally very compact and narrow. The re-use of these tunnels would require appropriate strengthening works to ensure safety, along with the installation of additional facilities, such as water supply, drainage, power supply and ventilation, depending on the intended use. These works and installation of facilities will occupy space within the air-raid tunnels, further narrowing the internal space, which may affect the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of their re-use. The Government currently has no plan for the full revitalisation and re-use of the underground air-raid tunnels. Subject to the research mentioned above and other policy needs

(e.g. tourism and history education, etc), the Government will conduct a more focused assessment of the conditions, limitations and cost-effectiveness of re-using individual disused air-raid tunnels.