

LCQ21: Urban renewal

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

According to "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030", the number of private housing units aged 70 years or above (i.e. completed in 1976 or before) is expected to be about 326 000 by 2046, nearly 300 times of the building stock of the same age in 2015. Regarding urban renewal, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following information on (a) Urban Renewal Authority projects and (b) private redevelopment projects in each of the past 10 years: (i) the number of private housing units supplied, and (ii) the numbers of demolished private residential buildings and housing units involved;

(2) given that in the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) promulgated in 2001, the authorities stated their aim to achieve the target of redeveloping some 2 000 ageing and dilapidated buildings through a 20-year urban renewal programme, but this target was removed from the new URS promulgated in 2011, whether the authorities will set a target afresh and include it in URS in order to expedite the redevelopment of old and dilapidated buildings; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(3) how it will assess the effectiveness of urban renewal and the implementation of the new URS?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Housing Bureau (HB), the Buildings Department (BD), the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), my reply is as follows:

(1) Based on the data gathered from different bureaux and departments as consolidated by the HB, the numbers of private residential flats supplied by redevelopment projects in the past decade (2013-2022) are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Year	Number of private residential flats supplied by redevelopment projects* (based on the year in which the occupation permits were issued)		
	URA projects	Private redevelopment projects	Total

2013	300	3 000	3 300
2014	1 300	3 000	4 300
2015	1 700	2 100	3 800
2016	1 300	3 700	5 000
2017	200	2 600	2 700
2018	800	4 600	5 400
2019	400	3 000	3 400
2020	2 500	2 400	4 900
2021	1 200	2 400	3 500
2022	300	3 700	3 500
Total	9 900	30 500	40 400

*: Individual figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Based on data gathered from the RVD and the URA, the numbers of private residential flats demolished in redevelopment projects in the past decade (2013-2022) are shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Year	Number of private residential flats demolished in redevelopment projects* (Note 1)		
	URA projects	Private redevelopment projects	Total
2013	1 000	600	1 600
2014	900	1 600	2 500
2015	400	1 600	2 000
2016	500	600	1 100
2017	100	1 400	1 600
2018	200	700	900
2019	100	800	900
2020	100	800	900
2021	1 100	1 300	2 500
2022	1 200	1 200	2 400
Total	5 600	10 600	16 200

*: Individual figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Based on data gathered from the BD, the numbers of private buildings (Note 2) demolished in redevelopment projects in the past decade (2013-2022) are shown in Table 3:

Table 3

Year	Number of private buildings demolished in redevelopment projects* (based on the year the Certificate on Completion of Demolition Works is acknowledged by the BD)		
	URA projects	Private redevelopment projects	Total
2013	40	320	360
2014	30	80	110
2015	40	120	150
2016	30	80	110
2017	10	80	90
2018	2	70	80
2019	10	90	90
2020	0	170	170
2021	20	180	200
2022	60	220	290
Total	240	1 410	1 650

*: Individual figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

(2) and (3) The achievements of the work of the URA over the past some 20 years is evident to all. To date, the URA has taken forward 73 redevelopment projects (of which 46 projects have been completed), which are expected to provide a total of 33 200 new residential units (of which 14 300 units have been completed). In order to implement the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) revised in 2011, the URA has adopted a new approach in taking forward these redevelopment projects over the past decade or so. Instead of focusing on redevelopment of individual old buildings located in different areas as announced in 2001 URS, the URA has shifted to taking forward urban renewal under the "planning-led and district-based " approach as promulgated by the 2011 URS which capitalises on the opportunity brought by redevelopment to re-plan traffic routes, pedestrian facilities as well as greening and leisure areas, etc, within the district. This will enhance the planning benefits of the projects, with more emphasis on quality rather than quantity. Moreover, the role of the URA in planning for old districts and proposing new planning tools to facilitate redevelopment has become increasingly important. Specific examples include the District Study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok completed in 2021 and the ongoing district studies for Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po. Also as a response to the redevelopment-cum-rehabilitation strategy recommended by the 2011 URS, the URA's work in the past decade or so has placed greater emphasis on building rehabilitation than in the past. The Government has allocated a total of \$19 billion for implementing various building rehabilitation support schemes and the URA, being responsible for the implementation of these schemes, is the Government's most important partner in building rehabilitation.

Although Table 3 shows that the URA projects and private redevelopment projects had in total demolished over 1 650 private buildings in the past 10

years, urban renewal remains a very tough task ahead. With the number of private buildings aged 50 or above increasing from 4 500 to 9 600 in the past 10 years, together with the about 3 100 "three-nil" buildings in Hong Kong, we need to adopt more effective policy measures to expedite the pace of redevelopment.

To this end, apart from raising the URA's borrowing limit in mid-2023 and continuing to provide the URA with land for development at nominal land premium, the Government has also promulgated in the 2023 Policy Address to formulate policy measures to speed up urban renewal. With a view to encouraging more private land owners to participate in urban renewal, the Government will introduce an amendment bill into the Legislative Council by end-2023 to update and streamline the compulsory sale regime under the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance (Cap. 545), including lowering the compulsory sale application threshold, facilitating adjoining-lot compulsory sale application, streamlining the legal process for compulsory sale application and enhancing support for minority owners affected by compulsory sale.

In addition, the Government will embark on a study this year to explore feasible measures with more ground-breaking policy means to use part of the reclaimed land outside the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands central business district to facilitate implementation of urban redevelopment projects by the public and private sectors, so as to address the problem of urban decay in a sustainable manner.

On building maintenance, we will continue to review and enhance the arrangement of building rehabilitation schemes. For example, the 2023 Policy Address has proposed reviewing the workflow of various stages of the Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0) (Note 3), and to assist and urge owners or owners' corporations who have applied for the subsidy to expedite actions to comply with the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) notices as early as possible. We will put forth specific recommendations in the first quarter of next year.

With the support of the above policies as well as the policy interaction between redevelopment and building rehabilitation, we will have a better basis to explore whether quantitative indicators should be set for future redevelopment work. We maintain an open attitude in this regard.

Note 1: Figures for URA projects are based on the year of commencement of the demolition contracts, while figures for private redevelopment projects are based on the year in which the demolished residential units are deleted from the Valuation List of the RVD.

Note 2: Excluding New Territories Exempted Houses, government buildings and buildings under the Hong Kong Housing Authority.

Note 3: The Government has allocated \$6 billion for the URA to launch the OBB 2.0 to subsidise eligible owners in co-ordinating inspection and repair works in respect of common parts under the MBIS.