

LCQ3: Handling of construction waste and management of public fill

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 9):

Question:

It has been reported that incidents of people illegally dumping construction waste in public places or rural areas have happened from time to time in recent years. The Audit Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman released reports in 2016 and 2018 respectively, criticising that the law enforcement agencies had been ineffective in combating such acts. On the other hand, as there have been few reclamation works carried out in Hong Kong in recent years, the quantity of construction and demolition materials used for reclamation and site formation works has declined, resulting in an excess supply of public fill over the demand and the saturation of the existing four public fill reception facilities and two fill banks. As such, the Government can only deliver the surplus public fill to places outside Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of (i) proactive inspections conducted to combat acts of illegal dumping of construction waste, (ii) relevant complaints received, and (iii) prosecutions instituted against the persons concerned, by the Environmental Protection Department and the Planning Department in each of the past five years; the new measures to be taken by these two departments in the coming five years to further combat such kind of illegal acts;
- (2) of the quantity of public fill generated in Hong Kong, and the respective (i) quantities of public fill received, (ii) total amounts of fees collected, and (iii) operational expenses incurred, by the four public fill reception facilities and the two fill banks in each of the past five years;
- (3) of (i) the quantity and percentage of the surplus public fill exported (with a breakdown by export destination), and (ii) the quantity and percentage of the surplus public fill discarded at the landfills, by the Government in each of the past five years;
- (4) as I have learnt that the demand of the Mainland construction industry for fill materials has gradually decreased in recent years, of the Government's measures to cope with the situation where the Mainland stops receiving fill materials from Hong Kong; and
- (5) of the respective current percentages of locally recovered glass materials that have been reused or used as fill materials (i) in Hong Kong and (ii) after exportation; given that there is currently an excess supply of fill materials, whether it has plans to take measures to raise the percentage

of glass materials to be recovered for reuse?

Reply:

President,

Regarding the questions raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan, our responses are as follows:

(1) Illegal land filling and fly-tipping of construction waste involve issues pertaining to various policy portfolios, with the concerned activities regulated by existing legislation on environmental protection, town planning, land management, buildings, drainage, public safety, public health or country parks. Relevant government departments enforce these legislation under their respective jurisdictions and statutory powers, and will conduct joint operations as and when necessary.

Figures on inspections conducted by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the Planning Department (PlanD), public reports received and prosecutions instituted against illegal dumping of construction waste for the past five years are set out at the Annex.

To strengthen the monitoring and tackling of illegal disposal of construction waste, the EPD has installed surveillance camera systems at around 50 construction waste fly-tipping black spots on government land and in public places to facilitate law enforcement and achieve greater deterrence against fly-tipping. The EPD plans to further extend the coverage to a total of about 70 locations by the end of this year and is in the process of preparing for the tendering exercise. Moreover, the EPD and other relevant departments will progressively introduce surveillance camera systems on the smart lampposts under a pilot scheme of "Multi-functional Smart Lampposts" as proposed in the 2017 Policy Address.

To achieve greater deterrence against illegal activities, the EPD will through various channels continue to raise public awareness on environmental protection, encourage the public to report illegal disposal of waste, enhance collaboration with relevant stakeholders, install surveillance camera systems at fly-tipping black spots and display warning posters at prominent places, etc.

Regarding the unauthorised land filling cases found in the rural New Territories, the PlanD will continue to provide additional manpower resources and closely monitor the situation. Timely and appropriate enforcement and prosecution actions will be taken under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap 131).

(2) Each year, the construction industry generates a large quantity of inert construction and demolition (C&D) materials (also known as public fill) which can be reused in reclamation or site formation works. While part of the public fill generated in Hong Kong is transferred to suitable construction sites for direct reuse, the rest is delivered to the public fill reception facilities for temporary storage and future reuse. Currently, there are four

public fill reception facilities, namely the two temporary fill banks in Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and Tuen Mun Area 38, the Chai Wan Public Fill Barging Point and the Mui Wo Temporary Public Fill Reception Facility. The quantity of public fill locally generated and the respective quantity received by the four public fill reception facilities in each of the past five years are tabulated below:

Year	Quantity Generated (million tonnes)	Quantity Received (million tonnes)
2013	22.8	12.9
2014	19.6	12.3
2015	22.8	16.0
2016	22.8	15.0
2017	17.9	13.3

Separately, the amount of public fill charges collected by the four public fill reception facilities and the expenditure incurred by the Government on public fill management in each of the past five financial years are tabulated below:

Financial Year	Charges Collected (\$ million)	Expenditure (\$ million)
2013-14	350	690
2014-15	360	910
2015-16	440	920
2016-17	410	1 180
2017-18	790 (Note 1)	1 070 (Note 2)

Note 1: The increased construction waste disposal charges (including public fill charge, sorting charge and landfill charge) were effective from April 7, 2017.

Note 2: The expenditure is provisional actual figure subject to adjustment.

(3) As local reuse cannot absorb all of the public fill generated in Hong Kong in recent years, the Government has been delivering surplus public fill to Taishan in the Guangdong Province for disposal since 2007. No surplus public fill has been disposed of at local landfills.

The quantity of surplus public fill delivered to the Mainland for reuse in the past five years are tabulated below:

Year	Quantity (million tonnes)
2013	9.8
2014	10.2

2015	13.0
2016	13.6
2017	13.5

(4) The Government has been closely liaising with relevant Mainland authorities on the delivery of surplus public fill to the Mainland to ensure its smooth operation. In addition, the Government has put in place suitable measures to encourage and help the construction industry to reduce and reuse C&D materials as far as possible. Particularly, we have been encouraging suitable reclamation projects that are on-going or under planning in the territory to absorb more local public fill, such as the current Three-Runway System project and the Tung Chung New Town Extension project.

(5) Currently, glass containers collected locally will be, after treatment, mainly used for producing eco-pavers. Some will be exported for recycling. Besides, the Civil Engineering and Development Department has drawn up technical guidelines on the use of recycled glass materials as fill materials. The use of recycled glass materials in public works projects has already started. We envisage that the glass materials locally collected can be fully absorbed through these outlets. Meanwhile, we have encouraged the glass management contractors hired by the Government to proactively expand recycling outlets for recycled glass materials, such as using them as raw materials for producing eco-cement and decorative tiles, and exporting them for recycling into new glass products.

The overall quantity of glass materials recycled in 2016 was 9 300 tonnes. We do not have a breakdown by the use of such recycled glass materials.