

LCQ7: Hillside escalator links and elevator systems

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 16):

Question:

In 2009, the Government established a mechanism for assessing proposals on hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) (the assessment mechanism). Upon completion of initial screening and scoring for the proposals received then, the Government decided to take forward 18 of such proposals (first-batch projects). In 2017, the Government announced that a consultancy study would be conducted to review and improve the assessment mechanism, and by then the Government received a total of 114 HEL proposals. The Government indicated at the end of 2019 that it planned, by 2020, to complete the scoring for those 114 proposals and determine the projects for priority implementation. However, most of the first-batch projects have yet to be implemented. Quite a number of members of the public look forward to an early implementation of such projects and proposals, to spare them the toil of climbing up long steep roads or stairs of more than a hundred steps every day. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the latest state of implementation of the first-batch projects;
- (2) whether it has completed the work of initial screening and scoring for the aforesaid 114 proposals and determining the projects for priority implementation; if so, of the details; if not, the expected completion date;
- (3) whether it has plans to take on more HEL proposals within the coming three years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) given that among the scoring criteria, the maximum score for the item of "number of beneficiaries and target" is 60, and the maximum scores for the two criteria under it, i.e. "expected daily pedestrian flow of the proposed HEL" and "proportion of 65 year-old or above population and whether there is any hospital/rehabilitation centre/nursing home in the beneficial catchment", are 40 and 20 respectively, but there are views that these two criteria should be given equal weighting (i.e. each to have a maximum score of 30), so as to adequately address the needs of the elderly and mobility impaired persons, whether the Government will adopt this suggestion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Michael Tien's question is as follows:

(1) Of the 18 projects assessed under the previous assessment mechanism established in 2009, five have been completed and are open for public use, three are currently under construction, while 10 are at various stages of planning, investigation and design. The latest progress of the 18 projects is set out at the Annex.

(2) Based on the revised mechanism, the consultant engaged by the Transport Department (TD) carried out initial screening, shortlisting and prioritisation of the 114 proposals on hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) received over the past few years. The TD is consulting the relevant District Councils on the assessment results so as to finalise the first batch of projects for implementation.

(3) With regard to the new HEL proposals raised by members of the public, it takes time for the consultant to gather information, conduct preliminary technical assessment and draw up preliminary alignments for these new proposals. To avoid delay to the implementation of first batch of proposals, the TD will, after finalising the first batch of projects for implementation, conduct review on and follow up on the new proposals along with those that have not been included in the first batch in due course.

(4) In consideration of the needs of the elderly and people with impaired mobility, the revised assessment mechanism has, compared with the mechanism established in 2009, increased the scoring weighting of 65 year-old or above population in the beneficial catchment from five to 20, and taken into account "whether there is any hospital/rehabilitation centre/nursing home", so that the proposed HEL can facilitate the elderly and those in need to commute. If necessary, the Government will consider whether the assessment mechanism is to be further revised.