

LCQ8: The Government's greening efforts

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 15):

Question:

In recent years, the Government has been committed to promoting district greening to enhance the liveability of Hong Kong. "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030", published in 2016 by the Development Bureau, mentioned that the Government had developed the Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for the urban areas and completed the recommended greening works, and it had been progressively extending the GMP initiative to the districts in the New Territories, including Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Islands District, Tai Po and North District. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the current greenery coverage and green space per capita in Hong Kong;
- (2) of the total number of trees and shrubs planted in the urban and rural areas in each of the past five years by the various government departments (with a breakdown by District Council district); the carbon dioxide in tonnes that could be absorbed by those trees and shrubs each year and its percentage in the total carbon emission of Hong Kong;
- (3) of the total expenditure and a breakdown of such expenditure incurred in each of the past five years by the various government departments on the management and maintenance of the trees and shrubs in the urban and rural areas;
- (4) of the respective numbers of greening works implemented in each of the past five years by the various government departments for the buildings under their management, and set out in a table the details of such works (including (i) the name of the building, (ii) the District Council district in which the building was located, (iii) the type of the works (e.g. roof greening, vertical greening, sky garden, terrace planting, etc), (iv) the greening area, (v) the expenditure on the works, (vi) the annual expenditure on maintenance and (vii) the annual expenditure on repairs); and
- (5) of the latest implementation progress of the GMPs for the New Territories; when the relevant greening works are expected to commence and complete; whether the authorities have provided guidelines on the planning, design and implementation of such works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Urban greening will not only beautify the environment, but will also help to moderate temperature and improve air quality. The Government has been incorporating quality landscape and greening in public works projects to make Hong Kong more liveable.

Apart from the implementation of the Greening Master Plans (GMPs), public works projects are required to incorporate greening elements in planning and development stages. For example, new government building projects should have greening measures on 20 to 30 per cent of the site area (including roof greening and vertical greening), new at-grade road projects should allow for space for quality greening and landscape works, and soft landscape provisions should be integrated in the highway structure projects to enhance our street environment.

The reply to the Hon Kenneth Leung's five-part question is as follows:

- (1) Around 78 per cent of Hong Kong's total land area is vegetated, i.e. covered under woodlands, shrublands and grasslands. The Government has not done any calculation on green space per capita.
- (2) The total number of trees and shrubs planted by the Government in the urban and rural areas in the past five years is shown at Annex A. Statistics on planting are not kept on District Council district basis. As calculated by the Environmental Protection Department in 2018 in accordance with the methodologies specified in the guidelines published by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the total greenhouse gas (GHG) uptake by carbon pools of woodlands, shrublands and grasslands in Hong Kong in 2016 was 454 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which accounted for about one per cent of the total GHG emissions in Hong Kong. The Government has not compiled the GHG uptake by the plants planted in the past five years.
- (3) Managing and maintaining the trees and shrubs on government land and at government facilities is part and parcel of the regular duties of various departments, which are discharged with their overall resources. There is no separate expenditure breakdown for the management and maintenance of trees and shrubs.
- (4) The greening works implemented on the government buildings in the past five years are set out at Annex B. Greening works is an integral part of a building project. The expenditure on maintenance and repairs of the greening works is also part of the overall expenditure on building maintenance and repairs. Separate breakdown is not available.
- (5) The greening works under GMPs for the New Territories (NT) Southeast (Sha Tin and Sai Kung Districts) and NT Northwest (Tuen Mun and Yuen Long Districts) were completed in October 2017. The Civil Engineering and Development Department is finalising the GMPs in NT Southwest (Tsuen Wan,

Kwai Tsing and Islands Districts) and NT Northeast (Tai Po and North Districts), and will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council Finance Committee in 2019, with a view to commencing the works in 2020, which will take about three years.

In planning and designing the GMPs, departments have followed the technical circulars and guidelines promulgated by the Development Bureau, including adoption of the "Right Tree Right Place" principle, use of the "Street Tree Selection Guide" in selecting suitable plant species which echo the GMP greening themes of the districts and enhancing vegetation diversity.