

LCQ6: Support service centres for ethnic minorities

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, in the Legislative Council today (February 28):

Question:

It is learnt that the Home Affairs Department will set up two additional support service centres for ethnic minorities (EM centres) this year, bringing the total number of EM centres to 10, and invite each of the 10 EM centres to set up an Ethnic Minority Care Team (EM Care Team) to proactively reach out to ethnic minority households and residents, so as to understand their needs and introduce to them public services they require. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of various support service items (including language classes, interest classes, and after-school tutorial classes) launched by various EM centres and the number of attendees for such activities in each of the past three years;

(2) whether the authorities have, since the Commission on Poverty conducted the Study on Ethnic Minorities' Awareness and Satisfaction towards Selected Public Services (including integration services provided by EM centres) in 2016, collected the views of participants in activities organized by EM centres and conducted related consultation on services provided by EM centres and the way forward; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it has set relevant basic criteria for the establishment of the two new EM centres, such as their location and size; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has assessed if there is overlap in functions between EM Care Teams and the existing District Services and Community Care Teams, if there is room for collaborative service provision, and if there are differences in their respective selection process and monitoring mechanism?

Reply:

President,

(1) The Home Affairs Department (HAD) has commissioned non-profit-making organisations to run eight support service centres for ethnic minorities (support service centres) in Wan Chai, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Kwai Tsing and Tung Chung. The support service centres provide language classes, after-school tutorial classes, integration programmes (including interest classes), etc to ethnic minorities to

facilitate their integration into the community. Among these centres, the CHEER Centre in Kwun Tong also provides general interpretation and translation services of English and eight ethnic minority languages (i.e. Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese) in non-specialised/non-professional areas.

In the past three project years (2020-21 project year to 2022-23 project year), the eight support service centres provided more than 1 200 language classes and after-school tutorial classes, some 11 000 integration programmes, more than 20 600 times of counselling, guidance and referral services, as well as some 28 000 times of interpretation and translation services, benefitting about 294 400 service recipients. The numbers of programmes and service recipients of the support service centres by service types are set out in Annex.

(2) The support service centres have all along collected views and feedbacks from service users and other stakeholders through various means, including questionnaires, opinion collection boxes, focus groups, meetings with stakeholders, to ensure that the support service centres can provide services that meet the needs of ethnic minorities.

(3) According to the 2021 Population Census, the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong has been increasing over the years. Excluding foreign domestic helpers, there are about 301 000 ethnic minorities, representing an increase of over 50 per cent as compared to the 2011 Population Census. Taking into consideration of the population statistics and views from stakeholders, the two new support service centres will be set up in Kowloon Central (covering Kowloon City and Wong Tai Sin) and New Territories East (covering Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O). The HAD is openly inviting eligible non-profit-making organisations to submit proposals to apply for funding to establish and operate the two new centres. The organisations are required to submit proposals with details including centre area, facilities, services and activity plans based on their experience and understanding of the needs of ethnic minorities for consideration by the HAD.

(4) The service recipients of District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) in 18 districts include ethnic minorities. However, due to language and culture differences with ethnic minorities, the HAD will set up one Ethnic Minority Care Team (EM Care Team) mainly constituted by ethnic minorities in each of the support service centres to better serve ethnic minorities. The EM Care Teams are expected to commence their services within this year. The EM Care Teams will collaborate with the District Offices and Care Teams in the 18 districts. When Care Teams encounter difficulties in serving ethnic minorities, they can refer the cases to EM Care Teams for follow-up actions. The EM Care Teams will also provide assistance to affected ethnic minorities in cases of accidents, emergencies or disastrous events.

The support service centres have already established a good network with ethnic minority communities as well as different government departments and organisations, and have ample experience in serving ethnic minorities. Compared with openly inviting applications from other eligible organisations,

setting up EM Care Teams in the support service centres can consolidate and make more effective use of existing resources to serve ethnic minorities.

Each EM Care Team shall comply with the guidelines and requirements issued by the HAD and are required to submit progress reports to the HAD regularly. The annual financial report of the support service centre must be audited by an independent certified public accountant. The HAD will closely monitor the operation of the EM Care Teams, including examining the progress reports submitted by the operating organisations, conducting inspection or attending relevant activities/services to evaluate the service effectiveness, and regularly reviewing the work progress and performance with the operating organisations. The relevant arrangements are generally similar to those for the Care Teams.

[Transcript of remarks by CS on 2024-25 Budget \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex after the Financial Secretary delivered the Speech on the 2024-25 Budget today (February 28):

Just now, the Financial Secretary delivered the 2024-25 Budget.

With the concerted effort of the Government and society at large, Hong Kong has been gradually regaining its growth momentum after getting through the pandemic. That said, as an externally oriented and open economy, Hong Kong continues to be affected by the complex and volatile external environment and unstable global economic recovery. Together, we have overcome various challenges along the way.

With this in mind, I consider that the latest Budget steadfastly seeks progress while ensuring stability. With the sustainability of public finance fully taken into account, the Budget has adopted targeted and effective strategies to formulate a series of short-, medium- and long-term measures. The mission is clear, that is, to develop Hong Kong's economy and improve people's livelihood, and to strengthen Hong Kong's unique advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland while being closely connected to the world.

May I give you some highlights of the Budget.

First, targeted relief is provided for enterprises and citizens to speed up their post-pandemic recovery. Measures include taxes and rates reduction, extension of the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme, injection into the BUD Fund

(Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales), and an extra allowance for social security payment recipients.

Second, timely adjustments are made to the demand-side management measures of the property market to create favourable conditions for recovery. After prudent consideration of the overall current situation, the Budget announced that, with immediate effect, the Special Stamp Duty, the Buyer's Stamp Duty and the New Residential Stamp Duty for residential properties be all cancelled.

Third, our high-quality development is fostered for better integration into the national development. The Budget seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong's "eight centres" under the National 14th Five-Year Plan; further attract enterprises, capital and talent to our city while grooming local talent; and strengthen tourism development through building the Hong Kong Brand.

Fourth, a fiscal consolidation programme is taken forward to control government expenditure and increase government revenue. Measures include containing the growth of operating expenditure and adjusting certain tax and fee items. The aim is to ensure the continued allocation of resources to provide and improve public services.

All in all, I fully support this year's Budget. I hope the Legislative Council will scrutinise and approve the appropriation bill as soon as possible. Let's continue to lead Hong Kong to advance from stability to prosperity and break new ground. Thank you very much.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

CE's statement on 2024-25 Budget

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, today (February 28) issued the following statement on the 2024-25 Budget:

The Financial Secretary today delivered the second Budget of the current-term Government. Amid the uncertain geopolitical situation and economic fluctuations, this Budget puts forward a series of concrete measures to bolster confidence, respond to the expectations of the public and enterprises and consolidate the momentum of recovery. Taking a long-term view, we are committed to promoting Hong Kong's high-quality development, accelerating the growth of strategic industries, nurturing talent and strengthening our competitiveness.

The Financial Secretary has provided adequate resources to fully support the launch and implementation of the initiatives announced in the Policy

Address. I welcome the Budget's fiscal consolidation programme, which focuses on restoring fiscal balance while fully taking into account the financial constraints of the public and businesses.

With the strong support from our country and the unifying efforts from all sectors of the community, I believe that Hong Kong will continue to leverage its advantages under "one country, two systems", strengthen the economy, improve people's livelihood, rise to the challenges and scale new heights. I share the Financial Secretary's confidence and optimism in Hong Kong's future, and I appeal to all sectors of the community to support this Budget.

Budget: Advance with Confidence, Seize Opportunities, Strive for High-quality Development

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, unveiled today (February 28) his 2024-25 Budget. He emphasised the need to advance with confidence, seize opportunities and promote high-quality development amid a complicated and ever-changing international environment, noting that "with our economy and society constantly evolving, more strenuous efforts are required to strengthen momentum of our economic recovery."

The Budget presents a series of measures aimed at bolstering confidence and creating favourable conditions for recovery. These include continuing to attract enterprises, capital and talent on all fronts, as well as providing assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through various measures, such as extending the application period for the 80% and 90% Guarantee Products under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme for two years.

For the property market, the Budget announced the immediate cancellation of all demand-side management measures for residential properties, including the Special Stamp Duty, the Buyer Stamp Duty and the New Residential Stamp Duty. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority will also adjust the countercyclical, macroprudential measures for property mortgage loans and relevant supervisory policies pertinent to property lending, where appropriate.

The Budget also highlights establishing Hong Kong as a premier destination for business and tourism through hosting more mega events and thematic annual conferences. This includes making good use of Victoria Harbour by holding monthly pyrotechnic and drone shows and revamping "A Symphony of Lights". Immersive and in-depth tourism, as well as local group-tour activities, will also be promoted.

The Budget continues to focus on green development and the digital economy, and includes measures to guide industries towards high-quality development. In addition to developing sectors such as innovation and technology and finance, the Budget suggests positioning Hong Kong as a multinational supply chain management centre, focusing on serving Mainland enterprises going global. This includes studying the establishment of a trade window to provide one-stop services for enterprises. Efforts will also be stepped up to attract Mainland manufacturing enterprises to set up offices in Hong Kong as headquarters for managing their offshore trading.

Regarding public finance, Mr Chan expressed the Government's determination to maintain the sustainability of public finances. The Government is implementing a comprehensive fiscal consolidation programme to achieve fiscal balance gradually and maintain fiscal reserves at a prudent level. Taking into account the need to strengthen momentum on economic growth as well as the burden on businesses and the public, the programme focuses on expenditure cuts, although some revenue measures have been included in a pragmatic manner.

Mr Chan concluded that the unique positioning and distinctive functions make Hong Kong irreplaceable as the country strides towards high-quality development and the building of a great modern nation. It is also the only place in the world where the global advantage and the China advantage come together in a single economy. So long as Hong Kong knows where it stands and charts the right direction, it will be able to give full play to its unique strengths. By blazing new trails and firmly pressing ahead, Hong Kong will certainly thrive and prosper, like a dragon soaring far and high in the boundless sky.

For more details on the 2024-25 Budget, click [here](#).

[Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley](#)

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (February 28). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles

heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic diversions will be implemented from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted

via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;

- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.