

LCQ15: Combating begging activities

Following is a question by the Reverend Canon the Hon Peter Douglas Koon and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

It has been reported that from time to time in recent months, there have been beggars begging in tourist areas with heavy pedestrian flow. Many of such people are non-Hong Kong residents. They have made use of their status as tourists to come to Hong Kong to engage in activities which are inconsistent with their status as tourists, and manipulation by syndicates may even have been involved behind the scenes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of complaints received by the authorities from members of the public and tourists about street begging activities in each of the past five years;

(2) of the respective numbers of persons who were arrested, prosecuted, as well as convicted and sentenced by the court for the offence of begging in each of the past five years, with a breakdown by (i) the districts in which the persons concerned were arrested, (ii) their nationalities, and (iii) the penalties imposed on them;

(3) whether, in the past five years, the authorities refused the entry of persons who had begged or illegally raised funds in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) as there are views that the deterrent effect of the punishment for the offence of begging under section 26A of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228) is grossly insufficient (i.e. persons convicted for the first and second time are liable to a fine of \$500 and to imprisonment for one month), whether the authorities will review and amend the relevant legislation and increase the penalty for the offence of begging, so as to enhance the deterrent effect; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) whether it will draw reference from the practices of other countries (such as strictly restricting the activity areas of beggars, displaying banners in tourist areas to remind passers-by not to be taken advantage of by beggars and donate money, and deporting beggars from outside the territory), so as to ameliorate the problem of street begging as well as maintain the cityscape and public order; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) regarding some "beggar gangs" suspected to be manipulated by syndicates, whether the authorities have established a reciprocal notification mechanism with other countries for co-operation in intercepting at source such

syndicates so that they cannot come to Hong Kong to engage in activities, or prohibited persons who have been arrested for begging in Hong Kong from re-entering Hong Kong within a specified period; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) given that begging is an offence, of the measures the authorities have put in place to remind members of the public to stay vigilant; of the measures and actions to be taken by the authorities to curb beggars' expansion of their activities in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Any person who begs or gathers alms at any public place may contravene section 26A of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228). The Police will follow up suspected begging activities in Hong Kong, and take appropriate actions based on the circumstances of each case. Regardless of whether the persons concerned are Hong Kong residents, the Police will consider laying related charges based on the evidence available. In the past, the Police adopted a multi-pronged approach to combat illegal begging activities through measures such as enhanced law enforcement and cross-boundary collaboration. The reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) In the past five years (as at November 30, 2023), the Police arrested 79 persons under section 26A of the Summary Offences Ordinance. Among them, 57 hold the Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (two-way exit permits), 18 hold Hong Kong identity cards, three hold passports of the People's Republic of China and one holds a Russian passport. The Police have not maintained information on the arrestees' nationalities or the number of complaints relating to begging activities. The respective numbers of arrests, prosecutions and convictions are set out at Annex I. A breakdown by district/division of the numbers of persons arrested is at Annex II.

(3) The Immigration Department (ImmD) takes into account various factors on a case-by-case basis when examining arriving visitors, including their purpose of visit and whether they meet the general immigration requirements (for example, whether they hold a valid travel document or an entry permit with adequate returnability to their places of origin). The ImmD has not maintained statistics on the number of visitors denied entry due to previous engagement in begging or illegal fund-raising activities in Hong Kong.

(4) In accordance with section 26A of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), any person who engages in begging activities commits the offence of "begging alms" and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$2,000 and imprisonment for one month for a first or second offence; and to a fine of \$2,000 and imprisonment for 12 months on a third or subsequent offence.

Furthermore, depending on the circumstances of each case, if a person's begging activity is conducted in a threatening or disorderly manner, the

person concerned may commit other offences such as "begging in threatening manner" under section 26B of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), which carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 18 months, "disorder in public places" under section 17B of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), which carries a maximum penalty of a fine at level 2 (i.e. HK\$5,000) and imprisonment for 12 months, etc.

The Police will keep a close watch on begging activities, including whether the penalties can achieve a deterrent effect. Appropriate enforcement actions will be taken based on the circumstances of each case.

(5) and (7) As it is against the existing law to engage in begging activities at any public place in Hong Kong, police officers on patrol will take follow-up actions when they identify begging activities or receive reports from members of the public. Depending on the evidence available, the Police will arrest and prosecute the beggars for the offence they are suspected to have committed. The Police will assess the situation and, where necessary, strengthen collaboration with other government departments, including stepping up joint patrols and enforcement actions with the ImmD at black spots of various districts and on streets with high pedestrian flows. In future, the Police will continue to take stringent enforcement actions against begging activities and exchange intelligence with the ImmD. Depending on the circumstances of each case, persons who are subject to deportation from Hong Kong will be repatriated by the ImmD to their places of origin as soon as possible in accordance with the prevailing immigration policy.

On publicity and education, the Police have been making timely efforts through various channels to remind members of the public not to casually give alms to beggars on the streets. For example, posts are put up on social media, emphasising that begging is an illegal activity and reminding members of the public to maintain awareness. The Police also plan to launch another round of public education nearer the Lunar New Year.

(6) The Police have been leveraging intelligence to monitor whether there are syndicates that arrange for and take control of begging activities carried out by visitors in Hong Kong, while maintaining close liaison and intelligence exchange with the relevant law enforcement agencies. The Police will take enforcement actions resolutely against any such illegal activities detected.

To tackle begging activities in Hong Kong by non-Hong Kong residents, the Police will notify the ImmD of the personal particulars of persons engaging in begging activities, and the ImmD will incorporate these particulars in a watch list. The persons concerned, upon their next arrival in Hong Kong, will be intercepted and closely scrutinised by ImmD officers. Those who fail to meet the normal immigration requirements (such as whether they possess a valid visa or endorsement that corresponds to their purposes of entry, and whether they have any known adverse records) or whose purposes of visit are put in doubt by ImmD officers will be refused entry.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has

established an effective notification mechanism with the relevant Mainland authorities. If Mainlanders have engaged in illegal activities in Hong Kong, their future applications for visiting Hong Kong will be under heightened scrutiny. To achieve effective immigration control, the ImmD regularly passes the personal particulars of Mainlanders with adverse records in Hong Kong (including whether they have been involved in begging or illegal fundraising activities in Hong Kong) to the relevant Mainland authorities, so that the permit-issuing authorities in the Mainland may step up scrutiny of their future applications for travelling to Hong Kong.

LCQ13: Traffic safety of electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Man-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

According to the statistics of the Transport Department, the proportion of first registered electric private cars in the total number of first registered private cars exceeded 50 per cent in 2022 and the first eight months of 2023. On the other hand, it has been reported that traffic accidents involving electric vehicles (EVs) have occurred frequently in recent years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective rates of traffic accidents and the respective numbers of casualties involving EVs and non-EVs in the past three years; if so, of the figures concerned; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will compile such statistics;

(2) as it is learnt that the methods of EVs for accelerating to start up and decelerating to stop are different to those of petrol vehicles, whether the Government has put in place measures to encourage or assist drivers to familiarize themselves with the operation of EVs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government has put in place measures to (i) regulate the standards of EV repair workshops and the qualifications of repair mechanics, and (ii) provide relevant training to repair mechanics; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Transport Department (TD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department in respect of traffic safety of electric vehicles, my reply to various parts of the question raised by Hon Leung Man-
kwong is as follows:

(1) According to TD's record, the traffic accident rates involving electric vehicles and non-electric vehicles between 2021 and 2023 are tabulated below:

Year	Traffic accident rates# (per 1 000 licensed vehicles)	
	Electric vehicle^	Non-electric vehicle
2021	31.9	31.4
2022	24.9	27.3
2023*	25.3	30.5

Notes:

^ Pure electric vehicle

Traffic accident rate is calculated with respect to the number of vehicles licensed in the middle of the year

* Provisional figures

The numbers of casualties in traffic accidents involving electric vehicles and non-electric vehicles between 2021 and 2023 are tabulated below:

Year	Numbers of casualties in traffic accidents (differentiated by vehicle fuel type)		
	Involving electric vehicle^ only	Involving both electric vehicle^ and non-electric vehicle	Involving non-electric vehicle only
2021	102	767	17 013
2022	114	982	14 544
2023*	276	1 765	16 380

Notes:

^ Pure electric vehicle

* Provisional figures

(2) The Government attaches great importance to road safety. The TD continues to disseminate safety tips for driving electric vehicles to the driving instructor trade to let learner drivers get familiar with the relevant information. In addition, TD has been collaborating with the Road Safety Council and the Hong Kong Police Force to enhance drivers' safety awareness when driving electric vehicles through various publicity and education activities.

(3) To tie in with the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles, the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035 and Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 as well as the latest development of electric vehicles, the Government has set up the Vehicle Maintenance Technical Advisory Committee (VMTAC) in collaboration with the vehicle maintenance trade, academic and training institutes, professional bodies, vehicle owners' associations and other stakeholders, etc. The VMTAC supports the inclusion of electric vehicle maintenance services under the existing voluntary registration schemes for vehicle maintenance. The Government is working with the trade, training institutes and other stakeholders to formulate voluntary registration requirements for vehicle mechanics (VMs) and vehicle maintenance workshops (VMWs) for electric vehicles, including training and skills required for the registration of VMs, facilities required for the registration of VMWs as well as the implementation details and timeline, with a view to enabling qualified VMs and VMWs engaging in electric vehicle maintenance to be included in the relevant scope of registration service in the future. The Government aims to launch the relevant measures within 2024.

In addition, the Government has been actively collaborating with various stakeholders to jointly promote and strengthen the training of electric vehicle technicians and mechanics. The Vocational Training Council offered a certificate course on electric vehicle repair and maintenance in August 2023 and is planning to set up a dedicated electric vehicle training workshop to train up more qualified VMs to cater for the popularisation of EV in Hong Kong; and the Occupational Safety and Health Council has launched a course on the safety awareness of electric vehicle maintenance in December 2023 for existing VMs to acquire the relevant safety knowledge about electric vehicle maintenance.

[LCQ1: Hosting international pop concerts](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

It has been reported that after the epidemic, many cities have hosted world tour concerts by world-class singers, attracting fans from all over the world to attend the concerts. In addition to the proceeds from tickets and merchandise, these concerts also boost industries such as tourism, retail and catering, thereby promoting economic development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the Government's existing measures to assist organisers in identifying suitable venues, arranging entry visas, etc, to attract world-renowned singers to hold concerts in Hong Kong;

(2) whether it will consider adopting a form of dedicated funding, such as relaxing the eligibility criteria of the Mega Arts and Cultural Events Fund to cover concerts, so as to secure international pop concerts to be held in Hong Kong; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as there are views pointing out that some concert organisers have no plan to come to Hong Kong because they consider that Hong Kong lacks major venues, and given that the Main Stadium of the Kai Tak Sports Park will be commissioned this year, whether the Government will proactively liaise with the industry and relevant stakeholders to jointly formulate plans on promoting the use of the Kai Tak Sports Park as a major performance venue; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is the Events Capital of Asia. There are many cultural, sports, entertainment, financial and other mega events organised in Hong Kong every year. While quite a number of them are organised or funded by the Government, many more are organised by private enterprises, such as most of the entertainment events including concerts, which are mainly operated on commercial principles without the Government's involvement. The Government is glad to see more large-scale concerts starred by internationally renowned singers and groups (hereinafter referred to as internationally renowned singers) to be held in Hong Kong. This will not only help Hong Kong develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, but will also attract tourists and boost the economy. In consultation with the Security Bureau and the Development Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip is as follows:

(1) and (2) As far as we understand, in considering the location and venue for conducting a large-scale pop concert for internationally renowned singers, most organisers will first take into account the singer's schedule and then various business factors such as concert scale, financial feasibility, target audience group, audience size and venue facilities, etc.

Hong Kong has the distinctive advantages of enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world. It also enjoys a geographical location connecting to the Greater Bay Area and has a broad audience base, as well as aviation and transportation networks connecting to the Mainland. Apart from having the characteristics of the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures, Hong Kong is also equipped with performance venues of different scales and supporting facilities which can meet the needs of various forms of performance. All these have attracted many internationally renowned singers to hold large-scale pop music concerts in

Hong Kong.

In fact, the number of large-scale pop music concerts held in Hong Kong has gradually returned to the pre-pandemic level, many of which were performances by internationally renowned singers. According to our statistics, on average, there were about two internationally renowned singers holding large-scale concerts with an audience of more than 10 000 each month in 2023, and most of them were holding more than one concert. So far, a number of internationally renowned singers have also confirmed that they would come to Hong Kong to hold large-scale concerts in 2024. In terms of figures concerning venues, extremely popular concert venue like the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKC) has enjoyed close to 100 per cent occupancy over the past five years. As to AsiaWorld-Expo and the Central Harbourfront Event Space, among the large-scale events organised therein last year, there were also some pop music concerts with the number of audience ranging from 10 000 to 20 000. It can be seen that holding large-scale pop concerts by internationally renowned singers in Hong Kong is not without attraction.

Although the decision of the organisers of holding these concerts in Hong Kong or not has been a commercial decision led by the private market, and the Government rarely provided financial assistance, relevant Government departments have been providing corresponding assistance and facilitation measures to attract and encourage more large-scale pop concerts by internationally renowned singers to be held in Hong Kong. Currently, we are also in touch with some concert organisers from time to time to understand their intentions and needs for holding concerts in Hong Kong. In terms of venues, we understand that given internationally renowned singers usually perform very frequently, it is necessary to confirm the performance time and location in advance to plan their itinerary. In this regard, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has offered Special Bookings arrangements for organisers of such performances, allowing them to submit booking applications, which will be considered with priority, to the LCSD more than one year in advance. In addition, there was also increase in waterfront venues for holding large-scale events. Apart from the Central Harbourfront Event Space, the waterfront event space in Wan Chai covering an area of about 1.4 hectares is now available for rental by interested parties through short-term tenancies. If any organiser intends to hold a concert in Hong Kong, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) and the Hong Kong Tourism Board will refer it to the venue operator so that the two parties can further discuss and conduct business negotiations, and will continue to provide appropriate support in the process. In fact, venue operators have commercial incentives to proactively reach out to concert organisers and arrange for more large-scale concerts to be held at their venues.

In addition, the CSTB and the Tourism Commission will also provide targeted one-stop support to mega events with significant visitor appeal and tourism promotional effect. Such support includes co-ordinating exchange and co-operation between the organisers and various bureaux/departments, assisting the organisers in obtaining necessary licenses and approvals, resolving various issues encountered throughout event organisation and collaborating with the tourism trade to jointly develop tourism products,

etc.

As regards support for entry arrangements, under the prevailing arrangements, non-local persons may apply for employment (including short-term employment for holding a concert) under the General Employment Policy or the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals. The Immigration Department will consider each application on its own merits and provide facilitation as far as practicable.

(3) The Government has all along actively increasing different facilities in the past years to meet the demand of venues for large-scale events including concerts. Occupying an area of about 28 hectares, the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) will soon be completed by phases by the end of 2024, providing the public with a world-class venue suitable for diversified activities. There are three main facilities in the Sports Park. Among which, the Main Stadium is equipped with a retractable roof with sound insulation function and a flexible turf system that can accommodate up to 50 000 seats for large-scale performance events. As for the Indoor Sports Centre, it is also equipped with retractable seating system capable of hosting entertainment events such as concerts for up to 10 000 spectators.

Kai Tak Sports Park Limited (KTSP), being the Contractor of the KTSP, is required to organise sports events on a certain number of days every year according to the Conditions of Contract and Operating Requirements. As for the remaining calendar of the year, the venues can be used to host different large-scale events such as concerts to cater for the needs of different sectors. In addition, the KTSP has to actively promote the Sports Park to the sports sector and entertainment industry both locally and internationally, with a view to introducing more diversified events into the Sports Park and promoting the venue as an international sports and entertainment destination of choice, thereby promoting Sports Park as a new landmark for sports, leisure and entertainment events and strengthening Hong Kong's positioning as an Events Capital.

Thank you, President.

LCQ11: Management of markets and hawker bazaars in the Kwun Tong district

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Ka-piu and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

Last year, the Government proposed to overhaul Ngau Tau Kok Market in the Kwun Tong district under the Market Modernisation Programme (Modernisation of Ngau Tau Kok Market). It is learnt that the stall tenants of the market are hawker licence holders who have been operating there for many years, and that most of the licensees are elderly. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as some stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market have relayed that there is still no concrete timetable for the Modernisation of Ngau Tau Kok Market, whether the authorities (i) have formulated a construction schedule and target completion date for the project to increase its transparency, and (ii) will consider replacing the overhaul works under the project with the redevelopment of Ngau Tau Kok Market, re-planning the site and adding topside properties, so as to optimize land use; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the number of hawker licence holders among the existing stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market, together with a breakdown of the number of years they have held the licence (i.e. (i) 0 to 10 years, (ii) 11 to 20 years, (iii) 21 to 30 years, (iv) 31 to 40 years, (v) 41 to 50 years and (vi) 51 years or above); whether the authorities will study enhancing the existing arrangements for the surrender of hawker licences, such as providing additional compensation to stall tenants based on the number of years they have held the hawker licence; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it has been reported that the development and operation of Yue Man Hawker Bazaar, a hawker bazaar, are unsatisfactory, with many vacant stalls in the bazaar and the products sold being repetitive and lacking in uniqueness, and that commercial tenants are required to hold fixed-pitch hawker licences in order to operate there, hence being subject to more restrictions on their operations, whether the authorities will study removing red tape to enhance the feasibility of revitalizing Yue Man Hawker Bazaar; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is taking forward the overhaul project of Ngau Tau Kok Market under the Market Modernisation Programme. Since 2020, the FEHD has been maintaining communication with tenants and relevant stakeholders (including Legislative Council (LegCo) members, Kwun Tong District Council members and Market Management Consultative Committee), seeking their opinions on the preliminary plan of the overhaul project and the arrangements during the construction period, etc. They generally welcomed in-situ overhaul of Ngau Tau Kok Market, and

suggested the provision of a short-term temporary market at a suitable location nearby to meet the residents' shopping needs during the overhaul works.

The FEHD consulted the Kwun Tong District Council in September 2023 on the proposed scope of works of the overhaul project of Ngau Tau Kok Market and the proposed sites for the provision of a short-term temporary market. After carefully considering relevant circumstances and views of various parties, it is considered that providing the short-term temporary market at the seven-a-side soccer pitch of Ngau Tau Kok Park is relatively more practicable. Currently, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) is conducting preliminary technical assessments in respect of the overhaul project and the short-term temporary market, and will begin detailed feasibility studies later. The ArchSD will draw up the proposed works programme and target completion date upon completion of the detailed feasibility studies in the second half of this year.

(2) As at January 17, 2024, the number of let-out stalls in Ngau Tau Kok Market was 370. Stall tenants of Ngau Tau Kok Market do not hold hawker licences. The landlord-tenant relationship between the FEHD and stall tenant is governed by tenancy agreement. Under the terms of existing tenancies of public market stalls, the landlord (i.e. the FEHD) and tenants are not required to make any compensation to the other party for tenancy termination with a written notice of not less than one month. Nevertheless, considering that the co-operation of tenants can facilitate the smooth implementation of market development plans for achieving the objectives of promoting district development and benefitting the public, which meet the overall interest of the community, the FEHD will, in accordance with the established policy and the applicable concessionary arrangements, provide assistance to affected tenants.

(3) Yue Man Hawker Bazaar (YMHB) is a hawker bazaar managed by the FEHD, and all stall operators shall hold a fixed-pitch hawker licence. To make way for the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project, licensed hawkers who had operated in Mut Wah Street, Hip Wo Street, and Kwun Tong district area in the past were relocated to YMHB. Stall traders at YMHB can choose to sell a wide variety of goods, including prepacked food and drinks, and/or various non-food dry goods such as clothing, haberdashery, household goods, pet products, small toys, information technology equipment and accessories, curios, souvenirs, crafts etc. In addition, stall traders can also apply to the FEHD if they would like to sell other non-food dry goods.

At present, among the 135 stalls in YMHB, 23 stalls are vacant. The FEHD has been closely monitoring the operation of YMHB and collaborating with the Urban Renewal Authority and its promotional contractors to enhance and improve the overall operating environment and atmosphere of the bazaar, such as organising workshops during festive seasons and inviting performing artists to perform so as to attract patronage; talks and workshops were also organised to encourage and assist stall traders in promoting their businesses through social media platforms etc. In addition, the FEHD has been maintaining close communication with the stall traders of YMHB. For instance,

the FEHD has met with trade representatives and LegCo member in recent months to listen to their views. We will continue to study and implement feasible measures to revitalise YMHB having regard to various factors such as the actual situation of YMHB and opinions of the stakeholders.

LCQ21: Smart recycling system

Following is a question by the Hon Lillian Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (January 24):

Question:

The Environmental Protection Department launched a Pilot Programme on Smart Recycling System in November 2020. It firstly introduced smart recycling bins in several GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities to try out the application of the system concerned and, from March 2023 onwards, it progressively installed smart recycling bins at housing estates, villages, shopping malls, universities and government venues. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the weight of recyclables collected by the smart recycling bins in various districts in Hong Kong, with a breakdown by type of recyclables;
- (2) whether it will regularly review the recycling data of the smart recycling bins in various districts, and increase the number of smart recycling bins in a timely manner; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether it will increase the amount of subsidies from the Recycling Fund for smart recycling bin-related projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it will formulate long-term publicity and education plans on environmental protection and recycling; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) launched a Pilot Programme on Smart Recycling Systems (the Pilot Programme) in end-2020 to test the local application of smart recycling devices connected with Internet of Things (IoT) technology, with a view to enhancing the efficiency of community recycling services. Starting from mid-2022, the Pilot Programme has

progressively increased the number of application points and expanded the scope of technical trial so as to build up experience for reference in mapping out the direction for the long-term development of local application of smart recycling systems. The smart recycling systems currently comprise smart recycling bins, smart balances, automatic gift redemption units, as well as supporting facilities (including a central data system which can support the GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme together with a compatible system platform for local application). The reply to the question raised by the Hon Lillian Kwok is as follows:

(1) Since end-2022, smart recycling bins have been installed in some Recycling Stations and Recycling Stores under the Pilot Programme. Starting from March 2023, smart recycling bins have been progressively set up in public housing estates, private housing estates, villages, shopping malls, universities and government venues, etc. So far, the smart recycling bins installed at 76 locations have all been put into service, which have received positive feedbacks from the public alongside the gradual increase in the quantity of recyclables collected. As at end 2023, these smart recycling bins at the 76 locations altogether collected a total of about 3 550 kilograms (kg) of recyclables per day, which are categorised as follows:

Type of Recyclables	Paper	Metals	Plastic Bottles	Other Plastics	Glass Bottles	Total Quantity of Recyclables Collected
Daily Quantity of Recyclables Collected (kg)	1 700	300	560	540	350	3 550

Note: The types of recyclables collected by smart recycling bins at different locations vary slightly from two to five types, depending on the requirements of the locations where the bins are installed.

(2) Since the launch of the Pilot Programme, the EPD has been persistently monitoring the usage and recycling data of the smart recycling systems at different locations. We are currently conducting a mid-term review on the Pilot Programme. Preliminary findings show that the operation of the smart recycling systems is generally smooth. The quality of recyclables collected by the smart recycling bins is better than that of the conventional recycling bins and the public responses are also positive. We will take into account the findings of the mid-term review to fine-tune the Pilot Programme as appropriate, such as adjusting the locations of setting up the smart recycling bins and increasing the number of smart recycling bins, subject to the availability of resources.

(3) At present, the Pilot Programme is implemented by the EPD with existing resources and without involving funding from the Recycling Fund or other sources. In reviewing the Pilot Programme and formulating the development strategy for the local application of smart recycling systems, we will take

into consideration the application scope of the smart recycling systems (including smart recycling bins), their role in the overall strategy on community recycling support, system layout and scale, cost effectiveness and sources of funding, etc.

(4) The EPD has been committed to promoting waste reduction for all, educating the public about the separation of waste at source and clean recycling. To strengthen publicity and education on waste reduction and recycling as well as on-site recycling support at the community level, the EPD established the Green Outreach in 2018 to provide outreaching services to the community. Through on-site guidance and hands-on demonstrations, the Green Outreach educates the public about the importance of waste reduction at source on a long-term and regular basis, encourages the public to practise separation of waste at source and clean recycling, disseminates the latest information on waste reduction and recycling and the related legal requirements to the community, and provides on-site assistance and recycling support to housing estates/residential buildings. In addition, the Green Outreach plans and implements publicity and education work to promote waste reduction and recycling in the community, including launching large-scale online and offline publicity and education activities, and conducting multimedia publicity programmes through social media and the Internet to encourage all members of the public to integrate waste reduction and recycling into their daily lives.

As of December 2023, the Green Outreach has conducted about 153 000 community visits, established connections with more than 4 500 property management companies and residents' organisations, which altogether provided waste reduction and recycling support for about 70 per cent of housing estates/residential buildings and villages in Hong Kong. In addition, the Green Outreach has organised more than 4 300 publicity and promotion activities in various forms to educate the public on separation of waste at source and clean recycling, offer training to property management companies/frontline cleansing workers, etc, on the proper handling of recyclables, and share the latest information on waste reduction and recycling and related legal requirements. These activities attracted a total of about 323 000 participants.