

## LCQ2: Ecological environment of Mai Po and adjacent marshes

Following is a question by the Hon Hui Chi-fung and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

Under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance, Mai Po and the adjacent marshes (the Mai Po Marshes) are designated as a restricted area. It has been reported that as mudskippers have become a gourmet dish on the Mainland in recent years, and the Mai Po Marshes are close to the Mainland, quite a number of people (mainly Mainland fishermen) trespass on the mudflats in the Mai Po Marshes to catch mudskippers illegally, thus scaring away migratory birds and depriving them of staple food. Furthermore, quite a number of migratory birds have been injured by the hunting appliance deployed in the area. Such activities have had a severe impact on the ecological environment there. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of reports received, and the number of law enforcement operations conducted, by the authorities in each of the past three years on illegal fishing or hunting activities in the Mai Po Marshes; the respective numbers of offenders arrested, prosecuted and convicted (with a breakdown by whether they were Hong Kong residents) as well as the maximum and minimum penalties imposed on the convicted persons;

(2) of the details of the law enforcement work carried out by law enforcement departments at the Mai Po Marshes, including the training received by the law enforcement officers, frequency of and manpower for patrol, as well as the expenditure and strategies of law enforcement work; and

(3) whether, in order to conserve the ecological environment of the Mai Po Marshes more effectively, the authorities will raise the relevant penalties, increase law enforcement resources, step up efforts in public education, strengthen the co-operation with the Mainland authorities in combating illegal fishing, and review the relevant policies and legislation?

Reply:

President,

Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay Restricted Area (Restricted Area), comprising a total area of about 800 hectares, includes all the mangrove swamps adjoining the marshes, and the intertidal mudflats and shallow waters of Inner Deep Bay. Mudskippers are common fish species in Hong Kong and can usually be found in the mudflat and shallow water habitats in places such as Inner Deep Bay, Sai Kung, Sha Tau Kok, Tolo Harbour and Lantau Island. Mudskippers are not only found in the Restricted Area. They are not protected

species and are occasionally sold in small amount in the local food market. However, conducting illegal activities (including catching mudskippers) in the Restricted Area might affect to different extent the resting of protected wild animals, especially water birds, and the ecology of the area.

The Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap 170) stipulates that any person who enters into or be within the Restricted Area without a permit issued by the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries and Conservation is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 on conviction. The Ordinance also bans the possession of hunting appliance, or hunting any local wild animals by means of hunting appliance except in accordance with a special permit. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$100,000 and an imprisonment of one year. Regarding the law enforcement, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) conducts regular patrol and enforcement operations in the Restricted Area. At the request of the AFCD, the patrolling officers of the Marine Police responsible for Deep Bay and coastal areas would provide support and take joint enforcement actions.

My consolidated reply to the questions raised by Hon Hui Chi-fung, after consulting the Security Bureau, is as follows:

(1) In the past 3 years (i.e. 2015-2017), the AFCD received two to four reports of illegal hunting in the Restricted Area and conducted around 800 boat or foot patrols and enforcement operations each year. A total of 200 to 970 fishing gears were seized in the operations annually. There was no prosecution case established under the Ordinance in the Restricted Area. The breakdown of figures is tabulated in the Annex.

(2) The AFCD carried out around 800 patrols in the Restricted Area per year to monitor the ecological conditions and conduct enforcement operations. Upon receiving reports about illegal entry to the Restricted Area, the AFCD will arrange staff to conduct inspections and enforcement operations. Joint operations of the AFCD, the Police or other concerned departments will be carried out when necessary.

At present, there are 13 AFCD staff responsible for the management and enforcement operations in the Restricted Area. Regular training related to surveillance, enforcement and prosecution is provided to the relevant staff. As these activities form part of the nature conservation work of the AFCD, there is no separate breakdown for the expenditure involved. The Police will also provide assistance and support upon the AFCD's request while the number of patrols and manpower allocation will be subject to crime situation and the need of police operations.

(3) To effectively conserve the ecological habitats in Mai Po Marshes, the AFCD and the Police have strengthened collaboration and taken targeted surveillance, patrol, enforcement operation, intelligence collection and exchange. In respect of cross-boundary co-operation, the Police has been liaising with relevant mainland authorities to combat criminal activities entering into Hong Kong. The AFCD has also contacted its Mainland counterpart for combating illegal fishing activities in Restricted Areas through education and publicity efforts for fishermen in both Hong Kong and the

Mainland of China. In addition, the AFCD reviews the provisions of the Ordinance and relevant policies from time to time with a view to better conserving the wild animals and their important habitats.

Thank you, President.

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## LCQ12: Aircraft noise

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chi-chuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

The Government has indicated that in order to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on areas in the vicinity of flight paths, the Civil Aviation Department has implemented a number of aircraft noise abating measures in accordance with the balanced objectives, promulgated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of managing aircraft noise. Such measures include requiring aircraft in the small hours to avoid, as far as possible, overflying populated areas, and adopting ICAO's noise abatement departure procedure during take-off and the continuous descent approach for landing. However, in recent months, I have received complaints from quite a number of residents in Ma Wan who pointed out that quite a number of aircraft overfly Ma Wan at an altitude below 5 000 feet after taking off in late hours (i.e. between 11pm and 7am the following day), thus generating tremendous noise and making it difficult for them to fall asleep. In addition, a number of residents in Clear Water Bay and Tseung Kwan O have relayed that aircraft have been overflying the two districts at an extremely high frequency in late hours since May this year, causing serious noise nuisance to the residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of aircraft departing Hong Kong which overflew Ma Wan at an altitude (i) below 5 000 feet, (ii) between 5 000 and 7 000 feet, and (iii) above 7 000 feet, from May last year to May this year (set out in a table);

(2) of the respective numbers of times, as recorded by the various aircraft noise monitoring terminals in late hours in each month from May last year to May this year, for which aircraft noise levels reached (i) 70 to 74 decibels (dB), (ii) 75 to 79 dB and (iii) 80 dB or above (set out in a table);

(3) among the aircraft departing Hong Kong from May last year to May this year, of the types of those with noise levels reaching 80 dB or above, and the airlines to which such aircraft belonged;

(4) of (i) the number of flights overflying Sai Kung District in late hours,

and (ii) the number of complaints about aircraft noise received by the authorities from the residents there, in each month from January to June this year;

(5) of the measures to be put in place to further abate aircraft noise; and

(6) whether it will set up an aircraft noise monitoring terminal in Sai Kung District; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In accordance with international standards and recommendations, the design of flight paths takes into account factors including terrain environment and required obstacle clearances. To ensure aviation safety, departing aircraft are required to comply with the minimum climb gradient requirements specified in the departure procedures published in the Hong Kong Aeronautical Information Publication (HKAIP). The departure procedures published in the HKAIP are designed in accordance with the safety requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). According to the relevant requirements, departing aircraft are required to fly at an altitude of not less than 1 800 feet in the vicinity of Ma Wan. The actual climb gradient of departing aircraft is dependent on various factors such as the payload and performance characteristics of individual aircraft and weather conditions, etc. Generally speaking, as far as minimum climb gradient is concerned, the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) would not specify additional requirement for departing aircraft apart from the requirements set out in the HKAIP.

Our reply to various parts of Hon Chan Chi-chuen's question is as follows:

(1) The number and altitude of aircraft flying over Ma Wan between 11pm and 7am the following day when departing to the northeast of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) between May 2017 and April 2018 (Note 1) are set out at Annex 1.

(2) The CAD has 16 noise monitoring terminals (NMTs). The aircraft noise events recorded between 11pm and 7am the following day by these terminals from May 2017 to April 2018 (Note 1) by month are set out at Annex 2.

According to the noise data recorded at the Ma Wan NMT between 2012 and 2017, the number of noise events of 70 decibels or above and of 80 decibels or above has decreased by 33% and 80% respectively. This shows the effectiveness of the aircraft noise mitigating measures adopted by the CAD, the details of which are elaborated in part (5) below.

(3) Between May 2017 and April 2018 (Note 1), the operating airlines and aircraft types of departing aircraft with noise events of 80 decibels or above recorded between 11pm and 7am the following day are set out at Annex 3.

(4) The HKIA has two parallel runways which run northeast to southwest. The

direction from which aircraft land at and depart from the HKIA mainly depends upon the wind direction and other operational considerations. Sai Kung area is primarily affected by aircraft approaching the airport from northeast direction, i.e. using Runway 25. When westerly wind prevails at the HKIA, aircraft will approach the airport from the northeast overflying Tseung Kwan O, Sai Kung, Ma On Shan, Shatin and Tsuen Wan for safety and operational reasons. As such, under acceptable wind direction, wind speed and safety conditions, arriving aircraft between midnight and 7am will be arranged to land from the southwest direction over the sea, i.e. using Runway 07, in order to alleviate the aircraft noise impact on the aforesaid areas. Furthermore, all aircraft approaching the HKIA from the northeast direction between 11pm and 7am on the following day are encouraged to adopt the continuous descent approach (CDA) subject to operational considerations. As aircraft on CDA descent from a higher altitude, noise experienced in areas such as Sai Kung and Ma On Shan will be lower. The number of aircraft flying over Sai Kung area between 11pm and 7am the following day when approaching from the northeast of the HKIA between January and April 2018 (Note 2) is set out at Annex 4. The number of complaints against aircraft noise from residents of Sai Kung area received by the Transport and Housing Bureau and the CAD between January and June 2018 is set out at Annex 5.

(5) The CAD has implemented a series of aircraft noise mitigating measures in accordance with the balanced approach to aircraft noise management promulgated by the ICAO. These measures include requiring aircraft to avoid overflying populated areas, to adopt the noise abatement departure procedures prescribed by the ICAO during take-off and the quieter CDA for landing, etc. in the small hours as far as possible. The CAD has also implemented the Radius-to-Fix turn flight procedures since 2012 to allow aircraft equipped with satellite-based navigation technology to adhere closely to the nominal centre line of the flight track when departing to the northeast of the HKIA and making south turn to the West Lamma Channel. This keeps the aircraft at a distance away from the areas in the vicinity of the flight paths (particularly Ma Wan), and reduces the impact of aircraft noise on these areas.

Apart from implementing the aircraft noise abatement operational procedures mentioned above, the CAD has prohibited aircraft not meeting the relevant aircraft noise standards from landing and taking off in Hong Kong. Since 2002, aircraft not complying with the noise standards in Chapter 3 of Volume I, Part II of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chapter 3 noise standards) are not allowed to operate in Hong Kong. To strengthen this aircraft noise mitigating measure, starting from 2014, the CAD has imposed further restrictions on aircraft which are marginally compliant with the Chapter 3 noise standards to land and take off in Hong Kong. To further strengthen this measure, the CAD is also planning to impose more stringent requirements with additional operating restrictions on aircraft which do not comply with the noise standards in Chapter 4 of Volume I, Part II of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chapter 4 noise standards) (Note 3), or equivalent, to operate at the HKIA from 10pm to 7am on the following day starting from the Summer Season of 2019. The airlines have been consulted on the plan, and they

showed understanding and support. This measure, when implemented, will further alleviate the aircraft noise impact on the local communities.

With the advancement of aviation technology, aircraft engines are quieter than before, and the improved design of airframe has also helped reduce noise significantly. To reduce the impact of aircraft noise on the areas near the flight paths, many airlines are replacing their aircraft with quieter models progressively. The CAD will continue to monitor the progress made by airlines in aircraft fleet replacement and deployment of quieter aircraft for night time operations, as well as the effectiveness of such measures.

(6) The CAD monitors the implementation of various aircraft noise mitigating measures and the noise caused by aircraft operating into and out of the HKIA through a computerised Aircraft Noise and Flight Track Monitoring System. At present, there are a total of 16 NMTs installed in Hong Kong covering locations along or close to the flight paths, which are respectively at Sha Lo Wan, Tung Chung, Sunny Bay, Ma Wan, Tsing Yi (2 terminals), Tai Lam Chung, Tsing Lung Tau, Ting Kau, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Tai Wai, Mid-Levels, North Point, Jardine's Lookout and Shau Kei Wan. Sai Kung is at a distance from the airport where overflying aircraft are at relatively higher altitudes and the aircraft noise impact is relatively low. Nevertheless, the CAD will where necessary deploy mobile noise monitoring equipment for short term aircraft noise monitoring and data collection at other locations for analysis in order to have a better understanding of the impact of aircraft noise on those locations.

Note 1: The data for May 2018 are pending verification and thus not available yet.

Note 2: The data for May and June 2018 are pending verification and thus not available yet.

Note 3: Volume I, Part II of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation sets out the aircraft noise standards formulated by the ICAO at different times. The aircraft noise standards of Chapter 3, which were formulated at a later stage than those of Chapter 2, are more stringent. Aircraft marginally complying with Chapter 3 noise standards refers to an aircraft which is in compliance with Chapter 3 noise standards, but its noise level is relatively close to the upper limit prescribed in Chapter 3. The aircraft noise standards of Chapter 4, which are applicable to aircraft for which the application for a Type Certificate was submitted between 2006 and 2017, are more stringent than those of Chapter 3. Generally speaking, the noise levels of Chapter 4-compliant or equivalent aircraft are lower than those of Chapter 3-compliant aircraft.

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# Land Registry releases statistics for June

The Land Registry today (July 4) released its statistics for June 2018.

## Land registration

- \* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in June was 9,252 (+18.8 per cent compared with May and +17.1 per cent compared with June 2017)
- \* The 12-month moving average for June was 7,319 (1.6 per cent above the 12-month moving average for May but 1.6 per cent below that for June 2017)
- \* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in June was \$80.8 billion (+27.2 per cent compared with May and +9.3 per cent compared with June 2017)
- \* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 6,713 were for residential units (+21.6 per cent compared with May and +10.0 per cent compared with June 2017)
- \* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$68.0 billion (+30.4 per cent compared with May and +15.0 per cent compared with June 2017)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme and the Tenants Purchase Scheme unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

## Land search

- \* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in June was 459,250 (-8.6 per cent compared with May and -1.5 per cent compared with June 2017)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-

service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

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## LCQ14: Office areas of government departments

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

The Government anticipates that the civil service establishment will increase by 6 700 posts to about 190 000 posts by the end of 2018-2019, representing a rate of increase of about 3.7%. However, quite a number of civil servants have relayed to me that as the offices of many government departments are already very crowded, it is difficult to make room for the offices of newly recruited civil servants. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether the authorities had, when deciding to increase civil service posts, formulated measures to ensure that the required additional office accommodation could be provided according to the approved schedules of accommodation as laid down in the Accommodation Regulations (the Regulations);
- (2) in respect of those government departments which need to handle and store a large amount of documents, such as the works departments handling a large amount of large-sized building plans, whether the authorities will, having regard to the actual needs of such government departments, plan larger office areas for them;
- (3) in respect of those government departments which need to have direct contact with members of the public and members of the industries concerned, whether the authorities have set standards for the sizes and numbers of the relevant (i) conference rooms, (ii) service counters, (iii) office desks and (iv) seats;
- (4) of the policy bureaux and government departments (including district offices) whose actual office areas at present are below the relevant standards in the Regulations; and
- (5) given that, according to my observation, most of the offices of the Buildings Department (BD) are very crowded, thereby affecting BD officers' everyday work and health as well as causing inconvenience to members of the



relevant industries who need to visit BD frequently to deal with various kinds of business, whether the authorities will address such problems squarely and make improvements; if so, of the implementation timetable for the improvement measures?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the different parts of the question raised by the Hon Tony Tse is as follows:

(1) to (3) To effectively meet the operational needs of departments and to ensure the optimal use of government resources, the Government Property Agency (GPA) formulates the government office space standards (including working space for individual staff and ancillary facilities such as meeting rooms, service counters, etc.) in accordance with the principles set out in the Accommodation Regulations to facilitate departments' estimation of office space requirements.

Departments will review the existing usable office space and apply for additional office accommodation where necessary after the creation of new civil service posts is confirmed. If there is a genuine operational need for more office space, such as handling and storing large-sized layout plans, GPA or the Property Vetting Committee will duly consider the information and request from the department and approve the additional space required according to the prevailing standards.

Upon confirming the additional office space require, GPA will identify suitable premises having regard to the department's requirements on location and timing, etc. If the requirements cannot be met by government-owned premises, GPA may consider leasing premises for the purpose.

(4) GPA has no information on the actual office areas of individual departments below the relevant government office space standards. In allocating premises to departments, GPA has ensured that the provision is made according to the standard. After allocation of premises, departments will manage their own office accommodations and they can make minor adjustments to the office layout in light of the operational needs to optimise the use of office space. If needed, they may apply for additional office space according to the aforementioned mechanism.

(5) Based on the staff establishment of the Buildings Department (BD) in 2015, the whole block of the North Tower of the West Kowloon Government Offices (WKG0) under construction has been reserved for the use of BD. The total office space of BD will increase from the existing provision of about 25 000 square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) to about 29 600 m<sup>2</sup> upon the department's relocation to the WKG0 in 2019, representing an increase of about 4 600 m<sup>2</sup>. It is anticipated that there will be a significant improvement in the overall office accommodation of BD. As regards BD's request for additional office requirement to cope with the increased manpower after 2015, GPA has approved

office space requirement of about 2 500 m2 and identified suitable premises to meet most of the requirements. GPA will continue to identify suitable premises to meet BD's accommodation needs.

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## LCQ8: Prevention and treatment of cancers

Following is a question by the Hon Kwong Chun-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

In 2014, more than 29 000 new cancer cases were recorded in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 32 per cent as compared with the figure of a decade earlier. The incidence rate of cancers among elderly persons (i.e. persons aged 65 or above) more than doubled that among non-elderly persons. In addition, one of every three deaths was due to cancers. Regarding the prevention and treatment of cancers, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the number of colonoscopy examinations conducted in public hospitals, and the average waiting time (and the relevant figures by hospital cluster) for such examinations, in each of the past three years; if such figures are not available, of the reasons for that;

(2) as an overseas medical organisation, after analysing the outcome of relevant studies, has recently pointed out that there is a downward trend in the age of people suffering from colorectal cancer, and the organisation has recommended that the minimum age of people who should receive colorectal cancer screening be lowered to 45, whether the Government will lower the minimum age of eligible participants of the Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Programme from 61 to 45;

(3) whether it has considered launching new subsidy schemes for preventing or diagnosing other types of cancers; if so, of the details;

(4) whether it knows, in respect of the waiting time for patients with cancers listed in the table below in each hospital cluster for receiving the first treatment after diagnosis, (i) the median and (ii) the 90th percentile, as well as (iii) the target set by the Hospital Authority (HA) (set out in tables of the same format as the table below); and

Cluster: \_\_\_\_\_

Cancer	Waiting time for receiving the first treatment after diagnosis		
	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Colorectal cancer			
Lung cancer			
Breast cancer			
Liver cancer			
Prostate cancer			
Corpus uteri cancer			
Nasopharyngeal cancer			
Thyroid cancer			
Stomach cancer			
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma cancer			

(5) given that when cancer patients cannot take, owing to undesirable side effects, the first-line drugs in the Hospital Authority Drug Formulary and the second-line drugs with safety net coverage (by the Samaritan Fund or Community Care Fund) for cancer treatment, they have to take drugs without safety net coverage at their own expenses, whether the Government will request HA to expeditiously include more second-line drugs (including T-DM1 for treating breast cancer) into the safety net so that cancer patients can receive effective treatment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Kwong Chun-yu's question is as follows:

(1) The Hospital Authority (HA) does not keep statistics on the waiting time for colonoscopy examination in public hospitals in the past three years. The table below sets out the number of colonoscopy examinations conducted in HA clusters in each of the past three years:

Cluster	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Hong Kong East	5 621	6 241	5 997
Hong Kong West	5 058	5 306	5 067
Kowloon Central*	5 335	5 369	9 044
Kowloon East	6 492	7 458	7 594
Kowloon West*	9 623	11 870	8 328
New Territories East	10 744	11 727	11 948

New Territories West	6 441	7 176	7 337
Total	49 314	55 147	55 315

Note 1:

\* Kwong Wah Hospital, Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital and the service units in the districts concerned have been re-delineated from Kowloon West Cluster to Kowloon Central Cluster since December 1, 2016. Reports on services/manpower statistics and financial information for the whole 2016-17 financial year (as at March 31, 2017) continued to be based on the previous clustering arrangement (i.e. relevant service units still under Kowloon West Cluster). Reports in accordance with the new clustering arrangement started from April 1, 2017. As such, statistics and financial information could not be directly compared with those for previous years.

(2) The Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening (CEWG) was set up under the Government's Cancer Coordinating Committee to regularly review and discuss the latest scientific evidence, local and worldwide, with a view to making recommendations on suitable cancer prevention and screening for the local population.

In response to the increasing healthcare burden arising from colorectal cancer, the Government launched the Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Programme (the Pilot Programme) in September 2016 to subsidise colorectal cancer screening for individuals with "average risk" (Note 2) targeted by the CEWG. The Government will regularise the Pilot Programme and progressively extend it in phases from the current group of persons born in the years from 1946 to 1955 (i.e. persons aged between 61 and 70 when the Pilot Programme was launched in 2016) to cover individuals aged between 50 and 75. The Department of Health (DH) is carrying out the related preparatory work and will announce the details in due course. The CEWG will continue to review local and worldwide scientific evidence, including the latest data and scientific evidence, and will revise or update the recommendations on cancer prevention and screening when necessary.

Note 2: Persons with "average risk" refer to individuals aged 50 to 75 who do not have significant family history. The CEWG recommends that they should consult their doctors and consider to undergo colorectal cancer screening.

(3) In examining whether to introduce a population-based screening programme for a specific disease or cancer, the Government needs to make reference to the CEWG's recommendations and carefully consider a number of factors, including the seriousness and prevalence of the disease locally, accuracy and safety of the screening tests for the local population, as well as effectiveness in reducing disease incidence and mortality. The Government also needs to give due consideration to the actual circumstances, such as the feasibility, equity, cost-effectiveness of the screening programme and public acceptance.

Based on the above principles, apart from the Pilot Programme mentioned

in part (2), we are also implementing a screening programme for cervical cancer. The DH, in collaboration with the healthcare sector, launched a territory-wide Cervical Screening Programme in 2004 to encourage women to undergo regular cervical cancer screening. To further help low-income women receive cervical cancer screening, a three-year Community Care Fund Pilot Scheme on Subsidised Cervical Cancer Screening and Preventive Education for Eligible Low-income Women was launched in December 2017, under which three service providers, namely the Centre of Research and Promotion of Women's Health of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong and the United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service, reach out into the community to encourage low-income women to receive free or subsidised cervical cancer screening as well as provide them with health education on prevention of cervical cancer.

In view of the increasing demand on staging imaging for confirmed cancer cases, the HA has implemented since May 2012 the "Project on Enhancing Radiological Investigation Services through Collaboration with the Private Sector" to provide computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging examinations for selected cancer patients fulfilling pre-defined clinical criteria. The target patient groups of the project have been expanded over the past years to benefit patients of more cancer types. The project currently covers 11 types of cancers, namely colorectal cancer, breast cancer, nasopharyngeal cancer, lymphoma, prostate cancer, stomach cancer, corpus uteri cancer, cervix cancer, head and neck cancer, sarcoma and germ cell tumour.

In fact, risk factors for cancers are closely related to lifestyles. Thus, the DH has been actively promoting healthy diet and regular exercise, and making great efforts to control smoking and educate the public about the harms of alcohol as the primary preventive strategies in reducing the burden caused by non-communicable disease such as cancer on the healthcare system and society. The Government will continue to promote health for all and prevention of diseases, and provide specific health promotion and disease prevention services having regard to the health needs and risks of various age groups and gender.

(4) The HA attaches great importance to the provision of appropriate care for cancer patients, and reviews on a regular basis the waiting time for patients with colorectal cancer, breast cancer and nasopharyngeal cancer to receive their first treatment after diagnosis. The table below sets out the 90th percentile waiting time (Note 3) for such patients to receive their first treatment after diagnosis in the period from 2014-15 to 2016-17:

	2014-15 (No. of days)	2015-16 (No. of days)	2016-17 (No. of days)
Colorectal cancer	71	70	78
Breast cancer	58	63	66
Nasopharyngeal cancer	50	50	54

Note 3: The 90th percentile waiting time refers to the number of days between the date when a patient is diagnosed with cancer after pathological examination and the date when the patient receives his/her first treatment. The waiting time of 90 per cent of such cases is shorter than the value indicated.

As for patients with other types of cancer, the HA does not have relevant statistics on the waiting time for their first treatment.

(5) As the major provider of publicly-funded public healthcare services in Hong Kong, the HA attaches great importance to the provision of appropriate care for all patients, while ensuring an equitable access to and effective use of public resources in the public interest. The HA has an established mechanism to regularly evaluate new drugs and review its Drug Formulary (HADF). In the evaluation process, the HA follows such core values as evidence-based medical practice, rational use of public resources, targeted subsidy, opportunity cost and facilitation of patients' choice, and takes into account the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of drugs and other relevant factors, including international recommendations and practices, advance in technology, disease state, patient compliance, quality of life, actual experience in the use of drugs, and the views of professionals and patient groups.

The Government and the HA understand the financial pressure and burden on cancer patients, as well as the latter's strong aspiration for listing certain new drugs on the HADF and including self-financed items (SFIs) in the subsidy scope of the safety net. Since 2018, the HA has increased the frequency of the prioritisation exercise for including SFIs in the safety net from once to twice a year, so as to shorten the lead time for introducing suitable new drugs to the safety net. The HA will keep abreast of the latest development of clinical treatment and scientific evidence, listen to the views and suggestions of patient groups, and continue to include suitable drugs in the safety net under the established mechanism to benefit more patients in need.