

~~MR PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): OK. My supplementary is: Will the authorities require them to fix this properly.~~

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): We have in fact pointed out time and again that this is not a major problem, only this has posed a special problem to this court. I dare not speculate on the reason but this is probably somewhat related to the execution of works. If people want to have air-conditioner condensation hoses linked to drain pipes when carrying out repairs and maintenance, I believe they will definitely do so.

Perhaps let me change the subject a little. Of course, we will not do this for HOS courts, however, if such a design is found in public housing estates, we will also channel the condensation to a drain pipe when carrying out repairs and maintenance, so as to reduce the nuisance caused to residents.

~~PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Last oral question.~~

Policy on Green and Innovative Buildings

6. **MISS CHOY SO-YUK** (in Cantonese): *President, in order to encourage developers to introduce green elements in the construction of buildings, the Government has implemented a policy on green and innovative buildings since 2001 to allow green features to be exempted from the calculation of gross floor area (GFA) of the developments concerned. At the Legislative Council meeting on 26 April 2006, the Administration advised this Council that it would review the effectiveness of the relevant incentives. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *of the progress of the review; and*
- (b) *whether it will consider introducing other measures to encourage the use of green materials and the provision of green facilities in buildings, such as those concerning energy saving, waste sorting, use of renewable energy and roof greening; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): President, it is an established government policy to encourage and promote the construction of green and innovative buildings. One of the measures is the exemption of certain green features from the calculation of GFA in building developments. This increases common areas and facilities in the buildings and also improves the living environment of residents.

My reply to parts (a) and (b) of the main question is as follows:

- (a) Since the introduction of the above measure, the Government has been monitoring the provision of green features in building developments. Recently, the Buildings Department (BD) has, in conjunction with other relevant departments, initiated a review of the effectiveness of the incentive measure. The review is expected to be completed early next year.
- (b) The Government's policy on provision of incentives covers balconies, wider corridors and lift lobbies, communal sky gardens, communal podium gardens, acoustic fins, sunshades and reflectors, non-structural prefabricated external walls, utility platforms and mail delivery room with mailboxes. These features are conducive to building a greener environment, reducing energy consumption and construction waste as well as promoting the use of natural renewable energy. They also provide residents with more usable areas, communal facilities and in turn enhance residents' convenience in many ways. Generally speaking, these facilities contribute positively towards improving people's quality of life. We have received positive and supportive feedbacks from our initial review. That said, exempting the green features from calculation of GFA brings another problem. The floor areas of these additional features will increase the bulk and density of the buildings and affect the surrounding environment. This issue is also a concern of the Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the general public and will be covered by our review. Before the completion of the review, we do not have any plan to offer GFA exemptions as an incentive for the provision of further green features at the moment.

To promote the installation of energy conservation and renewable energy power systems, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department has issued codes of practice and established guidelines to facilitate adoption by the industry as well as for the reference of the public.

As far as roof greening is concerned, the Architectural Services Department aims to implement green roof projects for new government buildings as far as practicable, and also encourages developers to incorporate green roof features into their private buildings projects.

As regards waste separation, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) encourages housing estates to adopt waste separation modes and recovery facilities that best suit the characteristics and design of their buildings. The EPD has published a "Guidebook on Source Separation of Waste in Residential Buildings" for the reference of the trade and the public. Staff from the EPD also pays visits to housing estates to provide advice on feasible waste recovery modes based on the physical settings of individual estates.

In addition, in order to promote separation of waste at source, the EPD and the BD are exploring the feasibility of introducing statutory requirements for new buildings to reserve floor space on each floor for the provision of a refuse storage and material recovery room. Such rooms will facilitate the separation and recovery of waste.

With the concerted efforts of various government departments, we are confident that we can further encourage developers to incorporate more green features into their development projects.

MISS CHOY SO-YUK (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary stated in the main reply that, since the exemption of green features from the calculation of GFA has aroused the concern of the PAC of the Legislative Council and the general public, therefore no more new incentives will be introduced. I have no objection to this.*

Nevertheless, incentives may come in different forms, other than only GFA exemptions. For example, buildings can be classified into different grades, whereby buildings with green and aesthetic features belong to a certain grade and can be sold at higher prices. This is also a possible incentive. A lot have been said by the Secretary in this respect, for example, the developers will be encouraged to carry out roof-greening projects in private buildings. However, may I ask what has been done specifically to encourage the developers? Since the Secretary said that there will not be GFA exemptions, what incentives will be provided then?

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): President, with regard to the problems we are facing every day, where does the point of balance lie? We have, of course, provided a number of incentives. The current question is: What more can be done on this basis? Earlier on, I have pointed out in the main reply that this approach will bring another problem. At the PAC meeting held last year, I said that this was a difficult give-and-take question. On the one hand, we have to firmly state the GFA, the built area and the bulk as some safeguards. However, flexibilities in other respects will be lost with these safeguards. Therefore, the issue is still under consideration. Regarding the remark made by me earlier about the absence of new incentives, it means that no new incentives will be introduced before the completion of this report.

Here is my response to the points raised by Members earlier. Despite that there will not be any provision of exemptions as incentives, but it is still possible if they want to. I have already disclosed the initiatives that will be implemented if circumstances permit, for example, space will be reserved in new buildings for the separation of waste at source. All these initiatives will be taken into consideration.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Miss CHOY So-yuk, has your supplementary question not been answered?

MISS CHOY SO-YUK (in Cantonese): *President, maybe the Secretary did not quite catch my supplementary question. In fact, my question is: Does he have any specific ideas to encourage developers to provide these green facilities, apart from GFA exemptions?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): President, I think the question has been answered and I have nothing to add. I wonder if Secretary Dr Sarah LIAO has anything to add.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND WORKS (in Cantonese): President, if we are not talking about the construction of buildings, perhaps I can report on other aspects, say, the measures to encourage private developments and public housing estates to participate in the programme of waste separation at source. In fact, there are 1.87 million Hong Kong people participating in this programme. So, what is the incentive? It is our commitment to contributing towards environmental protection. What is more, the rate of recovery may rise to 56%, which is an average taken from 64 housing estates.

The recovered material is also a kind of resources. I have learnt from some housing estates that — this is, of course, not a statistical figure — the monthly income generated from the recovery of material amounts to more than \$30,000, and this is the incentive. This sum of \$30,000-odd can be used for landscaping the housing estates and beautiful gardening — I can see that Mr LAU is very happy — whereas housing estates having commitment to society may use this sum of money to adopt orphans.

Therefore, incentive is not only confined to tangible properties, it is also a way through which a harmonious society can be built. In other words, while giving better protection to the environment will boost the vitality of communal activities as a whole, we can also make use of the recycled resources to create a better environment as well as to help other people. This is one form of incentive.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (in Cantonese): *President, during the recess this year, I followed a Legislative Council delegation to Tokyo inspecting roof greening. We all find this trip very meaningful. However, as noted from the main reply, the Government does not seem to be very active in this respect as the Secretary said, ".....the Architectural Services Department aims to.....as far as practicable". In other words, the Government will only do as far as practicable insofar as government buildings are concerned, and its attitude towards private developers is likewise merely one of encouragement. Is such an inactive*

attitude of the Government or the absence of relevant requirements attributable to the many financial or technical problems involved in roof greening? This is the point I wish to ask.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Which Secretary will answer this supplementary question? Secretary Dr Sarah LIAO.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND WORKS

(in Cantonese): Insofar as public works is concerned, active efforts have actually been made in greening, not only in roof greening and vertical greening, but better landscaping and greening as well. So far, 60 government-managed new buildings have been installed with roof or podium greening facilities. At present, government building projects under planning or construction that involve roof greening include schools, community centres, hospitals, office buildings, crematoriums and recreational and cultural facilities. The extent of greening will be determined by the use and design of the roof, and architectural consideration will usually be given as well. As a result, greening accounts for 10% to 80% of a building's total roof area, depending on the building services and communication facilities located on the roof.

Earlier on, Mr TAM mentioned the situation in Japan. I have visited Japan too. Since the place is subject to certain restrictions, greening projects cannot be implemented in every building. Consideration should be given to the properties where roof greening projects can be carried out, the cost incurred, the material specifications required for the structure and the actual design. The implementation of these projects are initiated by the Government. As for private buildings, apart from actively promoting the project, we will also examine the possibility of including a relevant requirement in the guideline, that is, the code of building. It is rather complicated to make greening a mandatory requirement as it is determined by the condition of each building. There is no easy way to implement the project in a broadbrush manner.

MR LEE WING-TAT (in Cantonese): *President, I believe the Secretary should be aware that green features of buildings, such as sky gardens and wider corridors are turned into built area by the developers when they put up the flats for sale. A study indicates that the areas of flats sold in the '80s and '90s were*

exaggerated to the extent that a flat with a built area of 1 000 sq m had a saleable area of 800 sq m to 850 sq m only, whereas buildings currently on sale have included such expanded facilities as sky gardens into the calculation of GFA. As a result, the saleable area of a flat with a built area of 1 000 sq m is only 750 sq m or 700 sq m.

This is actually an abuse by developers, who have turned the green facilities into saleable area. May I ask the Secretary how such abuse can be prevented? The Secretary is being good-intentioned, but this has given the developers an opportunity to reap more profits in the sale of flats.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Which Secretary will answer this supplementary question?

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): I think that the marketing strategies adopted by different property developers are not exactly the same. Generally speaking, the saleable area must be set out as developers are required to state the saleable area and the so-called GFA, as well as their ratio.

I guess that all buyers should know the size of the flats they bought if they have actually been there, and all the measurements should be made available to them. Certainly, the information provided by the developers may be incomprehensive when the flats are put up for sale, as we all know, the sale of uncompleted residential properties in particular, they have therefore been required to make improvements in this respect. Furthermore, there is a self-regulatory regime, and it is noted that they are now considering the introduction of penalties. Of course, we must first take a look at their specific proposals. If the proposals fail to cater for the needs of the general public, or they are not good enough, as I have said, the Government will intervene when necessary.

MR HOWARD YOUNG (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary stated in the main reply that the exemption of certain green features from the calculation of GFA has received many positive views, but there is also one negative view that the bulk of the building may increase and result in screening.*

My question is: Apart from this negative view, has the Government received other negative views pointing out that these facilities have resulted in the leakage of water to the unit immediately below it or affected the building structure?

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Which Secretary will answer this supplementary question? Secretary Michael SUEN.

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): President, a review is now ongoing. There is so far no flood of negative views, and I am not sure if there is such view at all. However, it should be negligible even if there is any because I can see that it is not covered by the relevant figures.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): We have spent more than 16 minutes on this question. Last supplementary question.

MR ALBRT CHAN (in Cantonese): *President, the Secretary highlighted in the main reply that green features can be exempted. However, just as Mr LEE Wing-tat said earlier, many developers still calculated the exempted areas into the saleable area when the flats were put on sale. This gives people a very strong feeling that the Government is transferring benefits to the major consortium, which belongs to collusion between the Government and business. How can the Secretary explain to members of the public and convince them that the inclusion of the exempted areas into the saleable area is in no way a transfer of benefits or collusion between the Government and business?*

SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LANDS (in Cantonese): President, I think that this question has been answered when I replied to the supplementary question raised by Mr LEE Wing-tat just now. We should all know that saleable area is different from the so-called GFA. If we are looking at saleable area, the exempted area is certainly not included.

Perhaps I should add something. It is true that green features can be exempted, but developers are not exempted from all payments relevant to the exempted areas. There is no need for the developers to pay if the place in question is a communal area, but if, however, it belongs to any unit, say, utility platforms and balconies, the developers concerned will have to pay for it.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Oral questions end here.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Outstanding Leisure and Cultural Services Projects of Former Municipal Councils

7. **MR CHEUNG HOK-MING** (in Chinese): *President, it has been reported that in view of the economic growth and favourable returns of the Exchange Fund, the Government will allocate funds to expedite the implementation of the outstanding leisure and cultural services (LCS) projects of the former Municipal Councils (MCs), and the costs involved will be around \$3 billion. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) *whether it plans to use \$3 billion to expedite the implementation of the outstanding LCS projects of the former MCs; if so, of the timing for the funding arrangement to be finalized, as well as the details and implementation timetables of the projects concerned; and whether it has estimated the job opportunities that can be created by these projects;*
- (b) *given that the Government reported to this Council in early 2006 that it would commence planning for 21 LCS projects, whether the LCS projects to be implemented with the abovementioned funds are among the 21 projects or are entirely new projects; and*
- (c) *whether the abovementioned arrangement will set a precedent, and whether the Government will allocate special funds under similar circumstances in future to implement projects to improve people's livelihood or measures to enhance social welfare?*