

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Paper for the House Committee meeting
of 5 January 2018**

**Questions scheduled for the
Legislative Council meeting of 10 January 2018**

Questions by:

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|------|------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) | Hon Kenneth LAU | (Oral reply) |
| (2) | Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG | (Oral reply) |
| (3) | Hon POON Siu-ping | (Oral reply) |
| (4) | Hon KWOK Wai-keung | (Oral reply) |
| (5) | Hon CHAN Chun-ying | (Oral reply) |
| (6) | Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kiwok | (Oral reply) |
| (7) | Hon HUI Chi-fung | (Written reply) |
| (8) | Dr Hon Pierre CHAN | (Written reply) |
| (9) | Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan | (Written reply) |
| (10) | Hon Jeremy TAM | (Written reply) |
| (11) | Hon Martin LIAO | (Written reply) |
| (12) | Hon SHIU Ka-fai | (Written reply) |
| (13) | Hon Frankie YICK | (Written reply) |
| (14) | Hon Tommy CHEUNG | (Written reply) |
| (15) | Prof Hon Joseph LEE | (Written reply) |
| (16) | Dr Hon Helena WONG | (Written reply) |
| (17) | Hon LAM Cheuk-ting | (Written reply) |
| (18) | Hon CHAN Chi-chuen | (Written reply) |
| (19) | Hon Michael TIEN | (Written reply) |
| (20) | Hon HO Kai-ming | (Written reply) |
| (21) | Hon WU Chi-wai | (Written reply) |
| (22) | Hon IP Kin-yuen | (Written reply) |

註 :

NOTE :

議員將採用這種語言提出質詢

Member will ask the question in this language

Compensation and rehousing arrangements for villagers
affected by development projects

(1) Hon Kenneth LAU (Oral reply)

In recent years, a number of development projects in the New Territories have commenced one after another. Some affected villagers have relayed to me that while the clearance date is drawing near, they have not been rehoused after a protracted period of time, and that the amounts of compensation that they may get are in no way sufficient for them to purchase a residential unit with a living environment similar to that at present, which make them feel helpless. On the other hand, the Government made special compassionate arrangements several years ago for the villagers of Chuk Yuen Village who were affected by the project for construction of a new boundary control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai. Such arrangements included identifying an alternative site for building a new Chuk Yuen Village to rehouse the indigenous villagers (“IVs”) and allowing the non-indigenous villagers (“non-IVs”) to build on nearby private agricultural land a two-storey cottage house with a maximum area of 500 square feet per floor. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of each of the three development projects of the Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Areas, the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area, and the Yuen Long South development, of the numbers of villages, IVs’ households and non-IVs’ households to be affected, as well as the projected expenditure and the actual expenditure to date on compensation and ex-gratia payments;
- (2) whether it will review and improve the policies on compensation and rehousing in relation to development projects, and whether it will set up a dedicated fund for development projects to expedite the disbursement of compensations to affected villagers; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will, in relation to the ongoing and upcoming development projects, appropriately rehouse the affected villagers by adopting the compassionate arrangements for Chuk Yuen Village, so as to maintain the cohesiveness of the affected rural communities, and prevent confrontations and disputes between the Government and the villagers arising from development projects, thereby promoting social harmony; if so, of the details; if not, the considerations for that?

Provision of financial assistance for the elderly

(2) Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG (Oral reply)

At present, applicants may receive only one of the various allowances (including Old Age Allowance (“OAA”), Disability Allowance (“DA”) and Old Age Living Allowance) under the Social Security Allowance Scheme. Regarding the provision of financial assistance for the elderly, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will consider lowering the age threshold for receiving OAA from 70 to 65, so as to alleviate the economic pressure on the elderly people below 70; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the respective numbers of elderly people aged 70 or above who received Normal Disability Allowance (“NDA”) and Higher Disability Allowance in each of the past five years, and the annual expenditures, as estimated by the Government, that will be incurred respectively if OAA is also disbursed to them concurrently; and
- (3) given that NDA is currently pitched at \$1,695 per month only, but quite a number of elderly recipients of NDA are in financial straits and have to meet huge medical expenses, whether the Government will enhance the financial assistance for them, such as increasing the amount of DA, and allowing them to concurrently receive OAA, which is pitched at \$1,325 per month?

Granting authorized absence to part-time athletes
for participating as a representative of Hong Kong in sporting events

(3) Hon POON Siu-ping (Oral reply)

Recently, a part-time athlete sought my assistance, saying that he had been selected earlier on by a national sports association (“NSA”) under the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China to participate as a representative of Hong Kong in a sporting event held on the Mainland, but his employer, which was a subvented organization, had refused to grant him authorized absence. As a result, he had to take annual leave in order to participate in the event. Regarding the granting of authorized absence to part-time athletes for participating as a representative of Hong Kong in sporting events, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the respective numbers of national and international sporting events in the past three years in which various NSAs had selected Hong Kong athletes to participate, and the number of part-time athletes selected to participate in such events;
- (2) as Regulation 1111 of the Civil Service Regulations stipulates that a civil servant who has been selected by an organization officially recognized by the Government to participate as a representative of Hong Kong in a national or international sporting event may be granted authorized absence not counting as leave, of the respective numbers of applications for authorized absence made and approved under such Regulation in the past three years, together with a breakdown of such numbers by the ranks (i.e. senior, middle and lower) to which the civil servants belonged and their relevant percentages; if there were applications rejected, of the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will enact legislation to stipulate that where an employee has been selected by an organization officially recognized by the Government to participate as a representative of Hong Kong in a national or international sporting event, his or her employer must grant him or her authorized absence, so as to give recognition to athletes for their efforts in winning glory for Hong Kong and to promote sports development; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Selecting by ballot of decoration contractors who will be permitted to do business in new housing estates and courts ready for intake

(4) Hon KWOK Wai-keung (Oral reply)

At present, eligible decoration contractors (“DCs”) may apply to the Housing Department (“HD”) for being listed on the Reference List of Decoration Contractors (“the Reference List”). When new public housing estates or Home Ownership Scheme courts are ready for intake, HD will select, by ballot from the Reference List, a certain number of DCs who will be permitted to do business in such housing estates or courts. However, the tenants and property owners concerned may engage other DCs. It was reported that earlier on, the Competition Commission (“the Commission”) had found after investigation that a number of selected DCs of a new public housing estate were allegedly engaging in anti-competitive practices of market sharing and price fixing as indicated by the fact that the printed quotations for decoration packages provided by them looked very similar in terms of layout and prices. The Commission therefore commenced legal proceedings against them. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has put in place standing measures (such as regular and surprise inspections) to check if the selected DCs have engaged in anti-competitive practices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the number and details of the complaints received by the authorities in the past three years about DCs on the Reference List allegedly engaging in anti-competitive practices such as market sharing and price fixing, and the follow-up actions taken; and
- (3) of the justifications for selecting by ballot a small number of DCs who will be permitted to do business in new housing estates and courts that are ready for intake, which has resulted in reduced competition; whether it has consulted the Commission on guarding against the selected DCs engaging in anti-competitive practices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Faster Payment System

(5) Hon CHAN Chun-ying (Oral reply)

On 29 September last year, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”) announced seven initiatives to prepare Hong Kong to move into a new era of smart banking. One of the initiatives is a Faster Payment System (“FPS”) to be launched in late September this year. The Chief Executive of HKMA said on the same day that FPS would be a core real-time payment platform providing customers with round-the-clock, inter-bank, all-year-round and real-time fund transfer services. This platform, which will be open to all banks and operators of stored value facilities, will enable real-time transactions at retail level and provide full connectivity for the various types of operators, and by then Hong Kong will become one of the few leading regions in the international arena in this aspect. Furthermore, for the purpose of encouraging and facilitating more small merchants to accept mobile payments, HKMA is actively discussing with the industry the development of a common QR code standard which will enable merchants to connect to the payment systems of different operators by only displaying a single QR code. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

- (1) HKMA has set, in respect of the launch of FPS, specific strategies, work plans and market share targets for the next few years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) it has plans to join FPS as an independent entity and takes the lead in making full use of a common QR code to collect taxes and various types of licence fees and fines; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) it has plans to make it a mandatory requirement for various public transport operators as well as chain supermarkets and convenience stores to fully accept common QR code payments; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Development of a smart city

(6) Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok (Oral reply)

Some professionals have pointed out that the Government proposed as early as in 2014 an information technology strategy with the theme “Smarter Hong Kong, Smarter Living”, but the progress was rather slow. Not until last month did the Government release the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, mapping out the development plans in the next five years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the Planning Department made public in March last year the Territorial Population and Employment Data Matrix (“TPEDM”) for reference of the relevant professional sectors in conducting technical assessments but the aggregated data of 26 larger districts rather than the data of 454 small districts were released, rendering the relevant sectors being unable to make full use of those data, whether the authorities will examine how to share those data more effectively with the relevant professions in the long run and consider afresh publishing TPEDM data by small district, as well as require various government departments to adopt machine-readable formats when publishing data in future, so as to facilitate application developers and relevant sectors in using the data; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) apart from implementing the Energizing Kowloon East project, whether the authorities will expedite the implementation in new development areas (such as Hung Shui Kiu, Tung Chung East and Tung Chung West) of various smart city related proposals, including conducting planning for infrastructure such as communications, pipe networks, smart homes and green architecture, as well as making proper planning on transport, healthcare, environmental protection, elderly services, etc. by using innovative technologies and big data, with a view to striving to create a green and low-carbon smart community; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) as the authorities proposed in the 2016 Policy Address that the number of WiFi hotspots under WiFi.HK be doubled to 34 000 within three years, of the progress of such work so far; whether the authorities will review that target and expedite the installation of WiFi hotspots and further raise the Internet access speeds of WiFi hotspots at busy locations, so as to enable members of the public to truly enjoy free WiFi service; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Grants approved by the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre and
the Quality Education Fund

(7) Hon HUI Chi-fung (Written reply)

The Government has allocated funding to establish the Hong Kong Teachers' Centre ("HKTC") and the Quality Education Fund ("QEF") respectively. The objectives of the former are, among others, to provide a neutral environment for teachers and educational organizations to share experience, as well as to encourage them to design and try new teaching materials and teaching methods, while the latter aims to subsidize non-profit making, pioneering initiatives within the ambit of basic education (i.e. kindergarten, primary, secondary and special education), e.g. organizing exchange activities and producing teaching materials. However, it has been reported that HKTC and QEF have over the years approved grants to teachers, schools and educational organizations with a predetermined political stance for them to produce printed matters with political inclination or organize related activities, raising doubts over whether public money is used properly. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the amount of grants approved in each of the past five years by HKTC involving production or publication of printed matters (e.g teaching materials, brochures, promotional leaflets and programme booklets), and the titles of the relevant printed matters, with a breakdown of such information by name of grantee organization (set out in tables of the same format as the table below);

Year:

Name of grantee organization	Amount of grant(s)	Title(s) of relevant printed matter(s)
...		
...		

- (2) of the amount of grants approved in each of the past five years by QEF involving production or publication of printed matters (e.g teaching materials, brochures, promotional leaflets and programme booklets), and the titles of the relevant printed matters, with a breakdown of such information by name of grantee organization (set out in tables of the same format as the table below);

Year:

Name of grantee organization	Amount of grant(s)	Title(s) of relevant printed matter(s)
...		
...		

- (3) of the titles of the printed matters produced or published by HKTC in each of the past five years and the amount of expenditure involved (set out in a table); and

- (4) whether the authorities will review the criteria adopted by HKTC and QEF for vetting and approval of applications for grants to avoid public money being used for producing printed matters with political inclination or organizing related activities?

General out-patient services

(8) Dr Hon Pierre CHAN (Written reply)

At present, members of the public may book consultation time slots at general out-patient clinics (“GOPCs”) within the coming 24 hours through a telephone appointment system of the Hospital Authority (“HA”). Some residents of different districts have relayed that there is currently a shortfall in the consultation quotas of various clinics, resulting in them often being unsuccessful or having difficulty in making appointments for general out-patient services through the telephone appointment system. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the following information about each GOPC in 2016-2017 (to be set out in a table):
 - (i) the average number of doctors who staffed at the clinic in each consultation time slot;
 - (ii) the total numbers of consultation time slots and consultation quotas for the whole year, and among such quotas, the respective numbers of those reserved for episodic disease patients (and, among them, the respective numbers of those reserved for civil servants and serving HA staff) and patients seeking follow-up consultations;
 - (iii) among the respective attendances of patients using the consultation quotas for episodic disease patients and those seeking follow-up consultations for the whole year, the respective attendances of patients who were (a) aged 65 or above, (b) recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, (c) serving civil servants and their dependents, and (d) serving HA staff and their dependents; and
 - (iv) the top 10 categories of diseases (as classified by the International Classification of Primary Care 2) which accounted for the highest attendances for the whole year and the respective percentages of such attendances in the total attendance;
- (2) whether it knows if HA conducted in the past five years any survey on the use and effectiveness of the telephone appointment system; if HA did, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) given that users of the telephone appointment system may choose to receive voice instructions in English, Putonghua or Cantonese only, whether it knows if HA has measures in place to (i) help ethnic minority patients who do not understand such languages/dialect make appointments for general out-patient services and (ii) allow them to book for the provision of telephone or on-site interpretation services when attending their appointments; if HA does, of the details; if not, whether HA will make improvements?

Safety of glass protective barriers, glass panel external walls and
glass curtain walls of buildings

(9) Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan (Written reply)

Earlier on, a woman fell to her death after smashing, allegedly due to a loss of her footing, a glass protective barrier on the platform of a shopping centre. On the other hand, quite a number of operators of upstairs shops have in recent years replaced the external reinforced concrete walls or block walls of their shops with glass panel external walls in order to attract customers. Moreover, glass curtain walls have been used as external walls on quite a number of new type of residential buildings, or glass has been used as protective barriers on their balconies. Regarding the safety of glass protective barriers, glass panel external walls and glass curtain walls of buildings, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether the use of glass protective barriers on building platforms and rooftops that exceed a certain height above ground level is prohibited under the existing legislation; if not, whether the authorities will, in the light of the aforesaid accident, enact the relevant legislation;
- (2) of the number of unauthorized works of construction of glass panel external walls which were uncovered in each of the past five years by the authorities during routine inspections or upon complaints by members of the public; the districts in which such cases were mainly located, and the number of cases in which the persons concerned were convicted;
- (3) whether the authorities have studied the durability of glass protective barriers, glass panel external walls and glass curtain walls, as well as the factors that may cause the glass of such structures to shatter abruptly;
- (4) whether building owners are required under the existing legislation to regularly arrange authorized persons to check the conditions of the glass protective barriers, glass panel external walls and glass curtain walls of their properties; if so, of the details; if not, whether the authorities will enact the relevant legislation; and
- (5) whether the authorities will conduct public education to remind building owners and managers to properly maintain the glass protective barriers, glass panel external walls and glass curtain walls of their properties; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

The use of military sites

(10) Hon Jeremy TAM (Written reply)

At present, there are 19 military sites in the territory managed and used by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison ("HK Garrison"), 12 of which are called barracks. It has been reported that the HK Garrison opens at weekends the airfield in Shek Kong Barracks for non-military activities, such as private flight training and the taking off and landing of private light aircrafts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the site area of each barracks, and whether it knows the number of military personnel stationed in each barracks; if it knows, set out the details by name of the barracks;
- (2) whether it knows the non-military activities currently permitted by the HK Garrison to be carried out in the military sites, and the legal basis for giving such permission; if it knows, set out the details by name of military site; and
- (3) whether it knows the total amount of revenue generated in the past three years from the non-military activities mentioned in (2), and the respective amounts of such revenue apportioned to the Government and the HK Garrison as well as the reasons for that?

Measures facilitating Hong Kong people and enterprises
in the development of careers and businesses on the Mainland

(11) Hon Martin LIAO (Written reply)

Quite a number of Hong Kong people have relayed that although Hong Kong and the Mainland are inextricably bound together by blood and there have always been close exchanges and ties as well as thriving economic, trade and other activities between the societies of the two places, Hong Kong people have encountered quite some difficulties in pursuing studies, taking up employment, doing businesses, setting up businesses, settling, etc. on the Mainland as they have not been accorded “national treatment”. Recently, a report made to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pledged support for the integration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“SAR”) into the overall development of the country. It also stated clearly that priority will be given to the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (“the Bay Area”), etc., thus fully advancing mutually beneficial cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong SAR, and that policies and measures will be formulated and perfected to facilitate the career development of Hong Kong residents on the Mainland. Meanwhile, the governments of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong SAR and Macao Special Administrative Region have signed the Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Bay Area, which aims to encourage an increase in investment between the Mainland and Hong Kong and Macao enterprises, encourage Hong Kong and Macao people to invest, set up businesses and take up employment in Guangdong, and provide more convenient conditions for Hong Kong and Macao residents to live on the Mainland. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that after conducting thorough researches and studies, the relevant Central authorities have earlier identified about 50 difficulties and problems encountered by Hong Kong and Macao residents in the areas of studying, working, living, etc. on the Mainland, and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council has in recent months announced one after another a number of policies and measures to facilitate the development of Hong Kong people on the Mainland (“facilitating measures”), whether the SAR Government knows which of such difficulties and problems have not yet been provided with corresponding solutions; if so, of the details;
- (2) of the details of the views the SAR Government relayed to the relevant Central authorities and the follow-up actions taken in relation to matters related to the facilitating measures, and the outcome achieved;
- (3) whether it will seek the introduction of more facilitating measures in the Mainland cities within the Bay Area under the “early and pilot implementation” approach, as so to assist Hong Kong people and enterprises in capitalizing on the opportunities brought about by the Bay Area development; if so, of the details; and

- (4) whether it will set up a dedicated platform to introduce and promote the various facilitating measures according to different policy areas, so as to facilitate Hong Kong people and enterprises to grasp the latest relevant information through the official channels of the SAR Government?

Restrictions on carrying or posting dried seafood and
daily necessities into the Mainland

(12) Hon SHIU Ka-fai (Written reply)

According to the Catalogue of Animals and Plants, and Animal and Plant Products Prohibited from being Carried or Posted into the People's Republic of China ("the Catalogue"), which came into effect on 2 March 2012, aquatic animal products are prohibited from being carried or posted into the Mainland. In addition, there are restrictions on the quantity of daily necessities and health food products that may be carried into the Mainland by travellers of Chinese nationality, and the relevant quotas have not been raised since 1996. A number of practitioners in the dried seafood industry have relayed to me that such requirements have severely dampened the desire of Mainland residents visiting Hong Kong to buy dried seafood, thus seriously affecting their businesses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the Catalogue provides for an exemption that: "[t]he animals and plants and their products and other quarantine objects carried or posted into the country, approved by the relevant national administrative departments, with the quarantine certificate issued by the competent authorities of the exporting country or region, are not affected by the [C]atalogue", whether the Government will discuss with the Mainland authorities the setting up of a quarantine system in Hong Kong which is recognized by the Mainland authorities under which dried seafood sold in Hong Kong may be exempted from the restrictions of the Catalogue; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it knows the local quarantine objects which are currently exempted from the restrictions of the Catalogue; whether any quarantine object will be exempted in the near future; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; whether any request for exemption was made by practitioners of the trade in the past five years; if so, of the details and outcome;
- (3) given that in reply to a relevant question raised by me on 14th June last year, the Secretary for Food and Health indicated that the Government would closely monitor the developments regarding the imposition of entry requirements by the Mainland authorities on Mainland travellers, of the Government's follow-up work in the past six months and the achievements made;
- (4) whether the Government will propose to the Mainland authorities, in light of the increased demand and purchasing power of Mainland residents, raising the quotas and the ceiling values applicable to such quotas in respect of the daily necessities and health food products which Mainland travellers may carry into the Mainland; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

- (5) as the Chief Executive has indicated in the Policy Address she delivered recently that the Government should take up the role of a facilitator and a promoter and conduct “government-to-government” lobbying, how the Food and Health Bureau and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau implement those governance philosophies to help the dried seafood industry and other industries resolve the aforesaid difficulties?

Short supply of ship repair and maintenance services

(13) Hon Frankie YICK (Written reply)

Some members of the trade have relayed that due to the ageing of ships, the demand for ship repair services has increased in recent years. However, given an incessant decrease in the number of ship repair sheds following the development of the waterfront, coupled with the increase in the time taken for ship repair and maintenance due to a shortage of ship repair personnel, ships in need of repair often have to wait for as long as several months. Consequently, the operation of the vessel trade and the livelihood of personnel working on ships have been affected. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the youngest, oldest and average ages of each type of ships registered in Hong Kong at present;
- (2) whether it knows the respective numbers of ship repair sheds and personnel in each of the past three years; whether it conducted in the past three years any study on the demand for ship repair services and personnel in the coming decade; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct such a study immediately;
- (3) whether it knows the average waiting time in the past three years for services of repair and maintenance of ships;
- (4) whether it will make available more waterfront sites and adjoining waters for letting out to the ship repair industry at concessionary rates; and
- (5) whether, in order to alleviate the manpower shortage of the ship repair industry, the Government will (i) step up the promotion of the qualification framework for the ship repair industry so as to enhance the professional image of ship repair personnel and attract young people to join the industry, and (ii) increase the amount of the monthly financial incentive currently provided to ship repair apprentices?

Development of primary healthcare services

(14) Hon Tommy CHEUNG (Written reply)

Some patient groups have recently pointed out that the healthcare systems of many western countries place equal emphasis on the prevention and treatment of diseases, and provide people-oriented primary healthcare services (e.g. home care). However, Hong Kong's healthcare system overemphasizes the treatment of diseases, and hence it is necessary for Hong Kong to catch up expeditiously. The Chief Executive, when addressing this Council on her Policy Address in October last year, indicated that she would give full support for planning and drawing up a blueprint for the development of primary healthcare services. The Steering Committee on Primary Healthcare Development ("Steering Committee"), established by the Government at the end of November of last year, will develop a blueprint for the sustainable development of primary healthcare services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether the authorities have drawn up a definition of "primary healthcare" which is applicable to Hong Kong; if so, of the details, and whether the authorities have made reference to overseas practices when drawing up such a definition; if they have not yet drawn up such a definition, whether they will assign the task to the Steering Committee; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the medical and nursing manpower, as well as that of other relevant sectors, required for the systematic development of primary healthcare services as estimated by the authorities; whether the manpower projections for healthcare professionals set out in the Report of Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development published in the middle of last year has taken into account the manpower required for the development of primary healthcare services in Hong Kong; if not, whether they will conduct manpower planning afresh for the development of primary healthcare services; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it knows in relation to the sustainable development of primary healthcare services, the Steering Committee's specific work plan and timetable for submitting a blueprint?

Manpower and duties of optometrists and orthoptists

(15) Prof Hon Joseph LEE (Written reply)

Regarding the manpower and duties of optometrists and orthoptists, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of optometrists and orthoptists employed in each of the past three years by the Hospital Authority (“HA”) and the Department of Health (“DH”);
- (2) of the respective (i) entry requirements (including the training received) and (ii) duties prescribed for the two grades by HA and DH; the overlapping duties of the two grades; and
- (3) given that there is currently no recognized local training course for orthoptists, whether HA and DH have considered having the duties of orthoptists undertaken by optometrists, in order to cope with the increasing service demand; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Mobile applications of the Department of Health

(16) Dr Hon Helena WONG (Written reply)

As at the end of last year, the Department of Health (“DH”) launched a total of 12 mobile applications, including IMPACT, Snack Check, HKeIC, CookSmart: EatSmart Recipes, EatSmart Restaurant and 1069. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of each of the applications, of the reasons for and cost of its development as well as the respective numbers of times for which it has been updated and downloaded so far;
- (2) of the channels through which DH promotes the applications to members of the public;
- (3) how DH assesses the user acceptance level of the applications and whether the objectives of the applications have been achieved; and
- (4) whether DH has plans to launch mobile applications this year; if so, of the details?

Commissioning of consultancy studies by the Government

(17) Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (Written reply)

Regarding the commissioning of consultancy studies by the Government, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of Government-commissioned consultancy studies conducted by each tertiary institution in each of the past five years, as well as the title of and the amount of the consultancy fee for each study;
- (2) of the respective total amount of consultancy fees paid by each policy bureau in each of the past five years, and among such fees, the respective amounts and percentages of such fees paid to various tertiary institutions; and
- (3) whether it has drawn up (i) general bidding qualifications for consultancy study projects, and (ii) a target percentage of consultancy studies in the relevant total to be conducted by local tertiary institutions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Overcharging of fees by telecommunications service operators

(18) Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (Written reply)

In reply to my question on 30 November 2016 on the issue of telecommunications service operators (“service operators”) overcharging service fees, the Government stated that where there was evidence indicating that a service operator might have breached the relevant legislation (e.g. the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) and the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362)) or licensing conditions, the Communications Authority would carry out an investigation and, for substantiated cases, it would penalize or prosecute the service operators concerned. Yet, I have still received complaints recently from members of the public about being overcharged of fees by service operators. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of complaints received in the past 12 months by the Office of the Communications Authority and the Consumer Council about service operators overcharging fees, with a breakdown by type of the telecommunications services (e.g. fixed-line telephone, mobile phone, external telecommunications and broadband Internet access) involved in the complaints;
- (2) among the complaints mentioned in (1), of the number of those in which the complainants were refunded of the overcharged fees by the service operators concerned, and whether any service operators have been prosecuted for overcharging fees; if so, of the number of such cases; and
- (3) apart from continuing to implement the Code of Practice in Relation to Billing Information and Payment Collection for Telecommunications Services, the Industry Code of Practice for Telecommunications Service Contracts, the “Customer Complaint Settlement Scheme” and the “mobile bill shock” preventive measures, whether the authorities will adopt new regulatory measures to enhance the protection of consumers’ rights and interests; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme

(19) Hon Michael TIEN (Written reply)

Among the kindergartens (“KGs”) which have currently joined the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme (“the Scheme”) implemented since the current school year, some KGs still charge their students’ parents school fees. Moreover, whole-day or long whole-day KGs which have kitchens complying with the requirements set by the Government in their school premises may receive a cook’s grant, but the grant may not be sufficient for covering the expenses on their cooks’ salaries. KGs may also apply for collecting meal charges from their students’ parents to cover meal-related expenditure (e.g. expenditure on food ingredients, cooking utensils and the cooks’ salaries in part or in full). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the current number of KGs which have joined the Scheme and have been approved to charge school fees; a breakdown of that figure by District Council district and type of KGs (i.e. half-day, whole-day and long whole-day), and in respect of each type of such KGs in each district:
 - (i) the total number of places provided and its respective percentages in (a) the total number of places provided by KGs which have joined the Scheme and (b) the total number of places provided by all KGs, in the district concerned; the highest, lowest, median and average amounts of school fees collected in this school year by such KGs from their students’ parents; and
 - (ii) the number of KGs with students who still need to pay school fees after receiving the highest fee remission; the total number of places provided by such KGs and its respective percentages in (a) the total number of places provided by KGs which have joined the Scheme and (b) the total number of places provided by all KGs, in the district concerned; the highest, lowest, median and average amounts of school fees payable by their students’ parents in this school year after receiving the highest fee remission;
- (2) whether it knows how the amounts of meal charges, payable in the first year of implementation of the Scheme by parents of the students of KGs which have joined the Scheme, compare with those paid in the previous year by parents of the students of such KGs; if it does, of the details;
- (3) whether it knows the number of KGs which have to use the income from meal charges to meet the shortfall because the cook’s grant is insufficient for meeting the expenses on their cooks’ salaries;
- (4) whether it will raise the level of the cook’s grant and stipulate that KGs may not use the income from meal charges to meet expenses on their cooks’ salaries, in order to ensure the quality of the meals for the students; and

- (5) whether it will consider providing additional financial assistance to those KGs which are not receiving the cook's grant, so as to reduce the amount of meal charges payable by their students' parents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Protecting persons joining outbound tour groups of
their consumers' rights and interests

(20) Hon HO Kai-ming (Written reply)

It has been reported that recently, an elderly couple claimed that only after their having signed up and made payment for joining a tour group to South America were they told by the travel agent that they needed to receive yellow fever vaccinations. Having learnt from the Department of Health that elderly persons who received such vaccinations for the first time would be at high risk of death, they decided to withdraw from the tour group but were not given a full refund by the travel agent. On protecting persons joining outbound tour groups of their consumers' rights and interests, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will request the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong to formulate directives requiring travel agents to provide customers with comprehensive travel health advice, including the vaccination requirements for entry to the countries or regions concerned, and the health risks faced by elderly persons in receiving such vaccinations, before having customers joining their tour groups; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether the authorities will consider afresh amending the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362) to stipulate that contracts involving pre-payment for services (including outbound tour group services) the transaction amounts of which have reached a certain level must contain provisions on mandatory cooling-off periods; and
- (3) how the authorities ensure that the Travel Industry Authority to be set up in future will fully protect persons joining outbound tour groups of their consumers' rights and interests, and will thoroughly investigate the complaints about suspected irregularities of travel agents?

Urban renewal

(21) Hon WU Chi-wai (Written reply)

Regarding urban renewal, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of buildings of three storeys or more which are now (i) 50 years old or above and (ii) between 40 and 49 years old, with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district; the relevant numbers in 10 years from now;
- (2) given that the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HS”) and the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation (“MOU”) in 2002, whether it knows the number of projects for rehabilitation, redevelopment and preservation of buildings undertaken by HS in accordance with MOU, and the titles, commencement dates and nature of the projects;
- (3) as it has been reported that seven redevelopment projects undertaken by HS in accordance with MOU might bring about surpluses, whether it knows the costs of acquisition and development, the revenue from property sales and the surpluses in respect of each project;
- (4) whether it knows if MOU is still in force; if MOU is, whether HS and URA will offer, in accordance with MOU, public rental housing, as well as different forms of subsidized housing like those offered under the Home Ownership Scheme, Sandwich Class Housing Scheme, and Starter Homes Pilot Scheme for Hong Kong Residents; if they will, of the activation mechanism and the relevant provisions, and whether the Government’s prior approval is required; if MOU has lapsed, whether the Government has plans to steer HS to offer subsidized housing again through participating in urban redevelopment projects, and invite URA to take forward subsidized housing projects; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will consider doing so;
- (5) given that URA is conducting a district planning study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok, whether the Government will request URA to study the feasibility of redeveloping some of the private old buildings in these districts into subsidized housing;
- (6) as some old buildings have fully utilized the maximum permitted plot ratios for the lots on which they are situated, and thus do not have any redevelopment potential, whether the Government has explored ways to take forward the redevelopment of such buildings;
- (7) apart from leaving URA to conduct urban renewal studies, whether the relevant government departments have carried out studies on the policies and measures concerned; and
- (8) whether it will study providing URA and HS greater policy and financial support in order to enhance their work of urban renewal?

Tuition fees of self-financing programmes
offered by self-financing post-secondary institutions

(22) Hon IP Kin-yuen (Written reply)

The Education Bureau (“EDB”) has put in place a mechanism to monitor the annual rates of increase in tuition fees of the self-financing undergraduate programmes under the following two subsidy schemes: the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong (“Subsidy Scheme 1”) and the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (“Subsidy Scheme 2”). Where a rate of increase in tuition fee higher than that of the Composite Consumer Price Index (“above-inflation tuition fee”) is proposed, the institution concerned is required to provide full justifications to EDB and obtain its prior approval. It has been reported that rates of increase in the next academic year’s tuition fees as high as 19% have been proposed for some of the programmes which are subject to monitoring by the mechanism. Regarding the tuition fees of the self-financing associate degree programmes, self-financing undergraduate programmes and self-financing top-up degree programmes offered by self-financing post-secondary institutions, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows, among the aforesaid three types of programmes, those programmes for which above-inflation tuition fees were charged in any one year from the 2014-2015 to 2017-2018 academic years, or will be/are planned to be charged for the next academic year, by the self-financing post-secondary institutions concerned, and set out in a table, in the order of the three types of programmes and by name of institution, the following information on each programme -
 - (i) programme title,
 - (ii) tuition fee for the academic year concerned and its rate of increase,
 - (iii) whether it was/is a programme under Subsidy Scheme 1,
 - (iv) whether it was/is a programme under Subsidy Scheme 2, and
 - (v) (if it was/is a programme under Subsidy Scheme 1 or 2 and an application for charging an above-inflation tuition fee for it was approved by EDB) the justifications for EDB giving the approval;
- (2) of the factors currently taken into account by EDB when vetting and approving applications for charging above-inflation tuition fees, and whether such factors include the affordability for students and the fiscal surplus of the institutions concerned; and
- (3) in respect of the tuition fees of the programmes under Subsidy Scheme 1 or 2 in each of the academic years from 2014-2015 to 2018-2019, of the number of applications for charging above-inflation tuition fees received by EDB and, among them, the number and percentage of applications approved (set out in a table)?