

Letter from Hon Tanya CHAN

**Request for related document and responses for agenda items discussed
at the LegCo Panel on Development meeting on 25 June 2019**

43CG – Greening Master Plans for the New Territories

Question:

(6) In the Director of Audit's Report No. 72, a number of inadequacies in the implementation of the greening master plans were identified, including considerable number of plants and theme trees failed to plant at the potential planting areas. Other recommendations were also included. How would the Government incorporate recommendations in the Audit Report and avoid repeating the issues revealed by the Audit Commission in formulating and implementing the Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for the New Territories.

Response:

In the light of Audit recommendations and departments' past experience, and making reference to landscape good practices, the Government will implement the following improvement measures in taking forward the GMPs for Northeast and Southwest New Territories —

- (1) In addition to checking, reviewing and assessing underground utility records, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) has also asked their consultants to step up site investigation works, including excavating more trial pits or making wider use of no-dig detection methods, to understand the underground conditions more comprehensively so as to enhance the success of planting. The proposed GMPs have the support of the District Councils (DCs) concerned. To take into account the latest district developments, CEDD will listen to the views of relevant DC Members on the detailed implementation arrangements.
- (2) On species selection, we will consult experts and liaise with the maintenance departments to set the reference planting ratio for theme trees and native plant species. The theme trees will be planted at

suitable locations (e.g. in groups along selected streets) with other tree species planted nearby to achieve a holistic greening effect. In addition, shrubs and suitable native plant species will also be planted to enrich the landscape, increase ecological value, and promote plant diversity.

- (3) CEDD will refer to the “Street Tree Selection Guide” issued by the Development Bureau in formulating the planting design under the GMPs. CEDD will consider the condition of the planting locations, the views of local stakeholders, the requirements for maintenance, etc. to select suitable plant species in accordance with the “Right Tree, Right Place” principle,. For instance, wind-resistant species for planting will be used at gusty locations to reduce the risk of branch failure or tree collapse due to strong wind.
- (4) CEDD will communicate with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) closely to share experience in the maintenance of plants and facilitate the formulation of greening works under the GMPs. CEDD and LCSD will jointly work out a common handover record to facilitate the maintenance works by LCSD after the handover. The record will include the planted quantities of trees and shrubs, information of trees with Diameter at Breast Height at or above 95 mm and the area of shrub beds.
- (5) As regards planting design, we will expand the tree pits along the pavement for tree planting as far as practicable. For example, we will try to form a continuous planting strip by connecting two or more adjacent tree pits to create larger underground space with suitable soil for root growth. This can facilitate better root development, which would in turn improve tree stability and resistance against strong wind. Moreover, we will add Biochar and mature compost into the soil mix to improve soil quality for healthy tree growth.