

立法會
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Panel on Development

Meeting on 27 November 2018

**Background brief on
the use of vacant government sites and school premises**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the use of vacant government sites and school premises, and gives a brief account of the views expressed by Legislative Council Members on the subject.

Background

2. According to the Administration, developable land not yet leased or allocated for long-term development uses and other government land which has yet to be planned for long-term development uses are in general under the management of the Lands Department ("LandsD"). To optimize the utilization of land resources, LandsD will make available such sites for temporary or short-term uses usually by way of short-term tenancies ("STTs") for external organizations,¹ or Temporary Government Land Allocations ("TGLAs") for government bureaux/departments.² Any land

¹ As at September 2017, there are about 5 300 STTs with a total area of approximately 2 450 hectares. Most are being used for works sites/works areas of public bodies (e.g. Hong Kong Housing Authority and Airport Authority Hong Kong, etc.). The major uses of other STTs include commercial use and not-for-profit community uses.

² TGLA is the temporary allocation of government land to a government bureau/department for works or use. As at September 2017, of the 4 000 TGLA sites with a total area of about 3 340 hectares of land, most are being used for works sites/works areas of government works, such as construction of roads. Other TGLA sites are those that are currently used to support various government and public uses.

that is not disposed of for private development (by land grant or STTs), not allocated for government uses (by Government Land Allocation or TGLAs), or not managed by government departments for specified use (e.g. country parks and public roads), etc. is considered vacant unleased and unallocated government land.

3. As for vacant school premises ("VSPs") that are no longer required by the Education Bureau ("EDB") for school or other educational uses, EDB will inform the Planning Department ("PlanD") and other relevant departments (such as LandsD and the Housing Department) under a Central Clearing House Mechanism to review and consider their alternative long-term uses (such as government, institution/community, residential and other uses). Upon confirmation on the long-term uses of the VSP sites, PlanD will inform the relevant departments of the follow-up actions as appropriate. Where feasible, the relevant departments will also identify and arrange temporary or short-term uses for VSPs as appropriate.

4. To enable better use of land resources, vacant government sites and VSPs located on government land under the management of LandsD are made available, where feasible, for application by non-government organizations ("NGOs") for use on a short-term basis.³ As of October 2018, there were 853 sites (including 21 VSP sites) available for application for short-term use. Details of these sites, including location, area, long-term use (where available), etc., can be found at the ["GeoInfo Map" website](#) of LandsD.

Proposed funding scheme to optimize the use of vacant government sites and school premises

5. To further support NGOs to make better use of vacant government sites and VSPs for community purposes, the 2018-2019 Budget has set aside \$1 billion to subsidize the costs of basic works required for eligible projects. In the 2018 Policy Address, the Chief Executive has announced the launch of a \$1 billion funding scheme to support gainful uses of vacant government sites and school premises by NGOs for short-term and non-profit-making community purposes.

³ The relevant application guidelines and procedures are set out in the ["Guidelines for Application for Use of Vacant Government Land that is available for Community, Institutional or Non-Profit Making Purposes on Short Term Use"](#) which is available at LandsD's website.

6. According to the Administration,⁴ the key features of the proposed funding scheme may include the following:

- (a) before an NGO makes an application for funding, it should have, following existing mechanisms, applied with LandsD or other relevant authorities managing the vacant site/premises in question for use of the site/premises and received in-principle approval for such use;
- (b) any funding to be approved under the scheme should focus primarily on one-off, basic and essential capital works required to make the site/premises fit for use, covering, for instance, essential slope upgrading works, site formation, erection of structures, provision of sewerage/drainage, renovation of dilapidated premises, etc.. Funding for furnishings and equipment, as well as recurrent funding, are not expected to be covered;
- (c) there should be reasonable safeguards to ensure that the earmarked funding is used sensibly across different projects to achieve good value for money. In this regard, it is likely that certain financial limits will be imposed to avoid the available funding being crowded out by big-ticket items; and
- (d) the Development Bureau will chair an inter-departmental committee comprising representatives from relevant bureaux/departments to consider the funding applications. The committee will also coordinate departmental efforts in providing technical advice for NGOs in taking forward their projects.

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

7. Given that land is a valuable resource in Hong Kong, Members were keen to ensure that the Administration is committed to planning, allocating and managing its land and properties in an efficient and cost-effective manner to optimize the use of public resources and site

⁴ Source: [Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2018-2019](#) (Reply Serial Nos. 022, 023, 029, 036, 043, 047, 074, 179, 240, 256 and 281)

utilization. Some Members called on the Administration to make good use of vacant government land, including VSP sites, and facilitate public inspection of the information on the vacant government sites managed by LandsD.

8. Some Members considered that the progress of the Administration's work on reviewing the alternative uses of VSP sites was slow, and called on the Administration to review the Central Clearing House Mechanism to achieve efficient allocation of VSP sites to potential users.

9. The Administration advised that in accordance with the prevailing procedures, PlanD would seek advice from the relevant bureaux/departments regarding proposals on the long-term use of VSP. Since 2012, PlanD had conducted three rounds of review of VSP sites, while since 2016, an annual review was being conducted. As at end-September 2017, PlanD had recommended suitable alternative long-term uses for 183 sites.

Council questions

10. At the Council meetings of 16 November 2016, and 22 February and 7 June 2017, Members raised questions relating to vacant government premises and sites. The hyperlinks on the questions and the Administration's replies are provided in the **Appendix**.

Latest development

11. At the meeting of Panel on Development to be held on 27 November 2018, the Administration will brief members on the proposal to set up a funding scheme to optimize the use of vacant government sites.

Relevant papers

12. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Use of vacant government sites and school premises

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	26 June 2017	Administration's paper on "Creation and Redeployment of Directorate Posts in the Development Bureau and Planning Department to Strengthen Support for Land Use Initiatives and District Planning Work" [LC Paper No. CB(1)950/16-17(03)] Minutes of meeting [LC Paper No. CB(1)1443/16-17] Administration's follow-up paper [LC Paper No. CB(1)214/17-18(01)]
Finance Committee	19 April 2018 (Special meeting to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2018-2019)	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. 022, 023, 029, 036, 043, 047, 074, 179, 240, 256 and 281)

Hyperlinks to relevant Council questions and the Administration's written replies:

Date	Council question
16 November 2016	Question raised by Hon Chu Hoi-dick on " Statistics on government lands "
22 February 2017	Question raised by Hon Nathan LAW ^{Note} on " Vacant government premises and sites "
7 June 2017	Question raised by Hon Nathan LAW ^{Note} on " Statistical information on government properties and sites "

Note: According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung had been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), and had vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and was not entitled to act as a member of LegCo.