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From : Clerk to the Legislative Council

To : All Members of the Legislative Council

Council meeting of 7 July 2021

Questions approved by the President

I attach for Members' information the questions approved by the President to be asked at the above meeting.

(Lolita SHEK)
for Clerk to the Legislative Council

Encl.

22 questions to be asked at the Council meeting of 7 July 2021

Subject matters

Questions for oral replies

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Note: As the Council meeting of 30 June 2021 will not be held, the 22 questions originally scheduled for that meeting will be dealt with at the Council meeting of 7 July 2021.

Question 1
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Public understanding of
the Communist Party of China

Hon LUK Chung-hung to ask:

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (“CPC”). There are comments that notwithstanding the fact that CPC, being the ruling party of China, has made tremendous contributions to the development of the Chinese nation, some Hong Kong people are holding prejudice against the ruling party as they have been misled by biased remarks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has plans to organize events to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of CPC; and
- (2) whether it has new plans to preserve the historical materials and facts related to CPC in Hong Kong?

Question 2
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

100% Personal Loan Guarantee Scheme

Hon CHAN Hak-kan to ask:

Earlier on, the Government launched, through the HKMC Insurance Limited, a 100% Personal Loan Guarantee Scheme (“PLGS”) to provide needy unemployed persons with assistance of a supplementary nature. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the respective numbers of applications received, approved, rejected and being processed by the participating lending institutions (“PLIs”) since PLGS was launched, as well as the main reasons for PLIs rejecting some of the applications;
- (2) whether it knows the average, longest and shortest time taken to vet and approve those applications mentioned in (1) which have been approved; and
- (3) as quite a number of members of the public have relayed to me that the pace of PLIs in vetting and approving applications under PLGS is too slow, the efficiency of which being far lower than that of their vetting and approving personal loan applications, whether the Government has received related complaints; whether it will discuss with PLIs the streamlining of the vetting and approval procedure so that PLGS can fully achieve the function of providing timely relief to address the imminent needs of unemployed persons; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 3
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Pilot scheme on electric ferries

Hon Wilson OR to ask:

To reduce air pollutant emissions from ferries, the Government earmarked \$350 million in the last financial year for implementing a pilot scheme on electric ferries (“the pilot scheme”) and exploring the feasibility of replacing traditional ferries with new energy ones in the long run. Four ferry service operators will conduct trials respectively with one electric ferry on one of their in-harbour routes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the latest progress of the pilot scheme and set out, in respect of each relevant route, the origin and destination, name of the operator, as well as the commencement date of the trial; and
- (2) whether, according to the Government’s assessment, the use of electric ferries will help reduce the operating costs of the operators; if the assessment outcome is in the affirmative, which of the in-harbour routes that have been discontinued due to financial unviability (e.g. the routes plying between Tuen Mun or Kwun Tong and Central) will become financially viable upon using electric ferries, and whether the Government will invite tenders to re-commission those routes, so as to provide the residents in the relevant districts with more options on public transport modes?

Question 4
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Government public transport fare concession scheme

Hon CHAN Han-pan to ask:

The Government announced in January this year that it would further extend the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (commonly known as “the \$2 Scheme”) to cover red minibuses (“RMBs”). However, residents’ buses are not yet included in the Scheme. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as some RMB operators have relayed that there are a number of monitoring conditions for joining the \$2 Scheme, including registration of the origin and destination of the routes and the fares, regular submission of audit reports, and signing of agreement with the Transport Department (“TD”), whether TD will relax the conditions so as to encourage more RMB operators to join the \$2 Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (2) given that residents’ buses are the major mode of external public land transport for Ma Wan residents, whether the Government will include residents’ buses travelling to and from Ma Wan in the \$2 Scheme, so as to alleviate the burden of transport expenses on the elderly and persons with disabilities living in Ma Wan; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 5
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Falun Gong organization

Hon Elizabeth QUAT to ask:

In July 1999, the Central Authorities announced their determination that the Falun Gong organization was an illegal organization on grounds that the organization, under the guise of religion, had in essence seriously disrupted social order and endangered national security, as well as decided that the organization be outlawed and its activities be prohibited. However, for over two decades, the activities conducted by the local Falun Gong organization in public places in various districts across the territory (including setting up street counters and staging exhibitions, distributing publications and conducting parades) have not been outlawed. Some members of the public are dissatisfied that the Falun Gong organization has spread subversive opinions through such activities and caused obstruction to pedestrians. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) if it has gained an understanding about the sources of funds for the local Falun Gong organization, and about whether illegal fundraising activities and receipt of funding from outside the territory have been involved; if so, of the details; and
- (2) whether it will outlaw the local Falun Gong organization and ban its activities in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and what measures are in place to prevent those organizations that the Central Authorities have decided to outlaw from conducting activities in Hong Kong?

Question 6
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Overseas judges of the Court of Final Appeal

Hon Paul TSE to ask:

Article 82 of the Basic Law stipulates that the Court of Final Appeal (“CFA”) may as required invite judges from other common law jurisdictions (“overseas judges”) to sit on CFA. CFA is constituted by five judges, including either a non-permanent Hong Kong judge or an overseas judge. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

- (1) the principles and conditions in accordance with which the Chief Justice of CFA (“CJ”) decides on the necessity to select a judge from the list of overseas judges to sit on CFA to hear individual cases;
- (2) the total number of cases heard by CFA in the past five years and, among them, the number of those in which no overseas judges sat on CFA; and
- (3) whether CJ has, when deciding which judge on the list of overseas judges is to be selected to sit on CFA to hear individual cases, considered if a judge was an appropriate choice from the national security perspective; whether CJ will, in the light of the implementation of the National Security Law for Hong Kong, take national security as a key factor for consideration in making the relevant decision?

Question 7
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Vaccination against seasonal influenza

Hon CHAN Kin-por to ask:

The Centre for Health Protection has pointed out that the two viruses which respectively cause the Coronavirus Disease 2019 and seasonal influenza (“influenza”) may spread concurrently in the coming winter influenza season. As members of the public infected with both viruses are likely to suffer clinical conditions which are more serious than those infected with influenza virus alone, thus exerting greater pressure on the healthcare system, vaccination against influenza is of paramount importance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the respective numbers of persons with influenza symptoms who sought medical attention from the public and private healthcare systems in each of the past three financial years and, among them, the number of those who were confirmed to have been infected with influenza; and
- (2) of the measures in place to further encourage members of the public to receive vaccination against influenza?

Question 8
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Management of public swimming pool complexes

Hon YUNG Hoi-yan to ask:

Since 2 April this year, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) has reopened one after another the public swimming pool (“swimming pool”) complexes that had been closed earlier due to the epidemic. However, in order to reduce the risk of epidemic spreading, LCSD has adopted a number of special measures for the reopened swimming pool complexes, including limiting the attendances to 30% of their capacities (such percentage having been relaxed to 50% since 24 June) and opening the swimming pool facilities only partly. At present, some swimming pool complexes are still closed. Regarding the management of swimming pool complexes, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following information on those swimming pool complexes that have all along been closed since 2 April this year: (i) the names of the complexes, (ii) the reasons for closure, (iii) the facilities which have been closed, (iv) the estimated number of affected swimmers, (v) the expected earliest reopening dates, and (vi) the considerations for determining the reopening dates;
- (2) as the epidemic has now subsided, and it has been reported that recently there have been instances of a large number of swimmers waiting outside a number of swimming pool complexes for 30 minutes or more before they were admitted, whether LCSD will further raise the ceiling for the attendances at swimming pool complexes and open all swimming pool facilities in the various complexes; if not, of the reasons for that;
- (3) of the total number of full-time and part-time seasonal lifeguards since 2 April this year who worked for less numbers of days or hours due to the partial or full closure of swimming pool complexes; the highest, lowest and average numbers of their working hours per week which were cut; the respective current numbers of full-time and part-time seasonal lifeguards whose working hours are below the levels in the swimming seasons before the epidemic; whether it has provided financial support for those seasonal lifeguards whose income has dropped due to reduced working hours; if so, of the details;

- (4) whether the arrangement of cutting working hours has resulted in wastage of or difficulties in recruiting seasonal lifeguards; whether there is a shortage of seasonal lifeguards in any swimming pool complexes at present; if so, of the details of the shortage; and
- (5) of the estimated (i) staff establishment and strength of civil service lifeguards in swimming pool complexes and (ii) number of seasonal lifeguards to be recruited, for the coming year; how such figures compare with those in the past two years?

Question 9
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Redevelopment of factory estates

Hon Jimmy NG to ask:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) announced on 24 May this year that based on the results of its earlier study on the redevelopment of its six factory estates for public housing use, it had decided to rezone for residential use the sites on which four of such factory estates (“the first four factory estates”) were located but to retain at this stage the remaining two factory estates (i.e. Hoi Tai Factory Estate and Chun Shing Factory Estate (“Hoi Tai and Chun Shing”)) for their existing uses. HA announced at the same time the demolition arrangements and clearance package for the first four factory estates. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the affected tenants/licensees of the first four factory estates (“affected tenants”) may participate in restricted tenders to bid for the vacant units in Hoi Tai and Chun Shing, but the current overall occupancy rate of the four factory estates is as high as 97%, whether it has assessed if the vacant units in Hoi Tai and Chun Shing can meet the demand of the affected tenants; if it has, of the details; whether it knows, among the affected tenants, the respective numbers of those who have indicated that they (i) intend to participate in the tenders, (ii) do not intend to participate in the tenders, and (iii) will move out within nine months so as to obtain an additional cash sum of \$100,000;
- (2) of the reasons why HA has required that the affected tenants may only rent the vacant units in Hoi Tai or Chun Shing with sizes not exceeding those of the units currently rented to them; whether it has assessed if such restriction will make it more difficult for the affected tenants to successfully rent suitable units in Hoi Tai or Chun Shing; if it has, of the assessment results, and whether it will request HA to remove the restriction;
- (3) as some affected tenants have indicated that they are dissatisfied with the meagre amount of the allowance/cash sum provided by HA, whether HA will increase the amount concerned to encourage more tenants to move out as early as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether HA has formulated long-term development directions for the sites of Hoi Tai and Chun Shing; if so, of the details?

Question 10
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Development of Tso/Tong lands

Hon LAU Kwok-fan to ask:

The Government indicated in the 2019 Policy Address that it would resume, by invoking the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap. 124), those private lands zoned for high-density housing development but still without any development plans due to various reasons and assessed as suitable for public housing development. To this end, the Government reviewed 10 land parcels, and announced earlier on that it would resume the private lands within three of these land parcels. Such private lands include Tso/Tong lands the development of which has been difficult for many years as the unanimous consent of all clan members for selling such lands could not be obtained. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that currently, as long as one member of the clan raises objection to the sale of Tso/Tong lands, the District Officer (“DO”) concerned will not issue consent to the sale decision, whether the Government will study amending the New Territories Ordinance (Cap. 97) to lower the threshold for selling Tso/Tong lands, e.g. by stipulating that a DO may issue consent for such sale if consent has been given by the Tso/Tong manager and the representatives of the various family branches, or that the relevant persons may, after obtaining the consent of a specific proportion of members of the clan, apply for compulsory sale of Tso/Tong lands;
- (2) given that the Home Affairs Department and the Heung Yee Kuk New Territories set up a working group in 2018 to discuss and examine those issues in relation to the handling of Tso/Tong matters, of the work achievements of the working group; and
- (3) as the Government indicated in its reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on 15 January last year that it did not keep information relating to the number and area of the existing Tso/Tong lands across the territory, whether the Government will compile the relevant statistics; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 11
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Travel Industry Authority

Hon YIU Si-wing to ask:

The Travel Industry Authority (“TIA”), established under the Travel Industry Ordinance (Cap. 634) in January 2020, will take over the functions of licensing and regulating the tourism trade from the Travel Agents Registry and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, as well as the administration of the Travel Industry Compensation Fund (“the new regulatory regime”). While the Government allocated \$350 million as seed money to TIA in February 2020 to support the initial operation of TIA, TIA will run on a self-financing basis in the long run. Its major sources of revenue are levies on outbound fares received by travel agents, licence fees, and registration fees on inbound tour groups from the Mainland. To reduce the impacts brought about by the new regulatory regime on the trade, the Government has proposed maintaining, for the first five years from the full implementation of Cap. 634, the former two items of levies and fees at the levels when Cap. 634 came into operation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the timetable for TIA’s preparation for the full implementation of the new regulatory regime; whether the preparation work has been delayed under the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic;
- (2) whether it knows the latest progress of TIA’s work on drafting the subsidiary legislation under Cap. 634 and on formulating the relevant administrative guidelines; whether TIA will, when carrying out the relevant work, consult the tourism trade to ensure the operability of such instruments;
- (3) as some members of the tourism industry have pointed out that the tourism industry was hit consecutively by the social incidents and the epidemic in the past two years and the road to recovery is long, which may thus affect the revenue of TIA, whether the Government will consider my earlier suggestion of increasing the seed money to \$500 million, so that TIA’s financial situation will be more stable; and
- (4) how the current organization structure and staff establishment of TIA compare with those initially planned by the Government; if adjustments have been made, of the details?

Question 12
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Encouraging members of the public to get vaccinated

Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan to ask:

It has been reported that quite a number of members of the public are hesitant about receiving the Coronavirus Disease 2019 vaccines (“the vaccines”), the causes of which include their concerns about severe post-vaccination adverse reactions and a reduction in income due to the need to stop working temporarily as a result of the side effects of the vaccines. On encouraging members of the public to get vaccinated, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether, apart from the consultation on vaccination currently provided by the general outpatient clinics under the Hospital Authority, the Government will provide simple physical check-ups (e.g. blood tests) free of charge for those members of the public who are willing to get vaccinated but are not sure if, given their health conditions, it is suitable for them to do so, with a view to allaying their concerns; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the measures in place to spur employers to provide their employees with paid leave, so as to incentivize members of the public to get vaccinated;
- (3) whether it has set a deadline for the provision of free vaccination services; if so, of such deadline, and whether members of the public will need to pay for receiving the vaccines after the deadline; and
- (4) whether it will provide mobile vaccination vehicle service and step up the existing outreach vaccination service (e.g. by lowering the minimum number of people receiving the vaccines as required for the service) so that members of the public may get vaccinated more conveniently; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 13
(For written reply)

(Translation)

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Dr Hon Pierre CHAN to ask:

Regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective up-to-date numbers of persons who have received vaccination at (i) Community Vaccination Centres and designated general outpatient clinics and (ii) designated private clinics, and set out, by the category of vaccinees, (a) the number of those who have received one dose of vaccine, (b) the number of those who have received two doses of vaccine, and (c) the percentage of those who have received two doses of vaccine in the population of that category (set out in tables of the same format as Table 1);

Table 1

Type of venue at which vaccinations were administered: _____

Category of vaccinees	(a)	(b)	(c)
Personnel in healthcare settings and those participating in anti-epidemic work			
Residents and staff of residential care homes for the elderly/persons with disabilities ("PWDs"), and staff of Community Care Service units for the elderly/PWDs			
Personnel maintaining critical public services (including employees of Government service contractors)			
Personnel working for cross-boundary transportation and those working at control points and ports			
Registered construction workers and other resident site personnel			
Practitioners of public transport (e.g. taxi/bus/public light bus drivers, train captains and station staff)			
Staff of food and beverages premises, markets, supermarkets, convenience stores and couriers (including couriers for takeaway food delivery)			
Personnel of property management (e.g. security guards, cleaning staff and property management office staff)			
Teachers and school staff (e.g. teaching and school staff as well as support personnel of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and universities; staff of special schools; drivers and escorts of school buses/school private light buses)			
Practitioners of the tourism industry			
Staff of scheduled premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (e.g. staff of fitness centres and beauty parlours)			
Domestic helpers			
Others (persons who do not belong to any of the above groups)			
Total:			

- (2) of the respective up-to-date numbers of (i) disciplined services staff and (ii) civil servants (including disciplined services staff) who have received vaccination, and set out, by the staff categories listed in Table 2, among such persons, (a) the number of those who have received one dose of vaccine and (b) the number of those who have received two doses of vaccine, and (c) the percentage of those who have received two doses of vaccine in the total number of staff members of that category; and

Table 2

Category of staff who have received vaccination	(a)	(b)	(c)
Staff of the Hong Kong Police Force			
Staff of the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department			
Staff of the Customs and Excise Department			
Staff of the Hong Kong Fire Services Department			
Staff of the Immigration Department			
Staff of the Government Flying Service			
All civil servants			

- (3) of the respective up-to-date numbers of persons holding Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao who are allowed to stay in Hong Kong as visitors having received one dose or two doses of vaccine in Hong Kong, and the total numbers of the persons concerned?

Question 14
(For written reply)

(Translation)

The Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers

Hon Mrs Regina IP to ask:

Since 2001, the authorities have held the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers once every year to assess if teachers and aspiring teachers have achieved the language proficiency needed for teaching the English Language subject or the Putonghua subject in schools. Candidates who have obtained Level 3 or above in all papers of the assessment are regarded as meeting the language proficiency requirement (“LPR”) for teaching the relevant subject in schools. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of the serving teachers who participated respectively in the (i) English Language and (ii) Putonghua assessments of this year, of (a) their number, (b) the percentage of that number in the total number of candidates, and (c) the percentage of them meeting LPR;
- (2) given that as far as the English Language assessment is concerned, (i) on average 44.6% of candidates from 2017 to 2021 obtained Level 3 or above in the paper on Writing, and such a percentage was far lower than the relevant percentages for the other three papers (i.e. Reading, Listening and Speaking), and (ii) 73.1% of this year’s candidates obtained Level 3 or above in the paper on Reading, and such a percentage was a significant drop from the relevant average percentage of the previous four years (i.e. 85.7%), whether it has assessed the causes for such performance of the candidates;
- (3) whether the Education Bureau will encourage more serving teachers who are teaching other subjects to take part in such assessments; and
- (4) of the new measures in place to enhance teachers’ proficiency in English Language and Putonghua?

Question 15
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Support for Hong Kong people suffering from illnesses on the Mainland

Hon LEUNG Che-cheung to ask:

Given that some Hong Kong people in Guangdong Province have been, due to the epidemic, unable to return to Hong Kong as usual for attending follow-up consultations at the outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority (“HA”), the Government launched a Special Support Scheme in November last year, under which the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (“HKU Shenzhen Hospital”) has been commissioned to provide subsidized follow-up consultation services for chronic disease patients who are in Guangdong Province and have made appointments for attending follow-up consultations at designated specialist outpatient clinics or general outpatient clinics of HA, until 31 July this year or the lapse of the quarantine arrangements in Hong Kong and on the Mainland (whichever is earlier). However, as psychiatric specialist outpatient services are not included in the Special Support Scheme, coupled with the Mainland authorities’ prohibition of posting psychiatric medications into the Mainland, it is difficult for the patients concerned to receive diagnosis and treatment and obtain the relevant medications on the Mainland. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of the HA patients in Guangdong Province who are in stable conditions and need to take certain psychiatric medications on a long-term basis, whether the Government will deliver through official channels the psychiatric medications regularly prescribed for them by HA doctors to the HKU Shenzhen Hospital for collection and use by such patients; if so, of the detailed arrangements; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the number of person-times of Hong Kong people who have been diagnosed and treated under the Special Support Scheme since its launch, with a breakdown by specialist outpatient and general outpatient services;
- (3) given that there is no definite time for the resumption of normal traveller clearance between Hong Kong and the Mainland, whether the Government will extend the Special Support Scheme and expand its coverage to include outpatient consultation services of more specialties (such as psychiatry); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

- (4) whether the Government will, in the long run, regularize the Special Support Scheme for the convenience of those Hong Kong people residing on the Mainland?

Question 16
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Construction waste and skips

Hon Vincent CHENG to ask:

It has been reported that the problems of fly-tipping of construction waste and indiscriminate placement of skips are still acute in a number of districts at present. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following information on (i) fly-tipping of construction waste and (ii) indiscriminate placement of skips respectively in each of the past three years (with a breakdown by District Council district (if applicable)):
 - (a) the number of reports/complaints received,
 - (b) the number of cases uncovered through inspections,
 - (c) the number of surveillance camera systems installed at the black spots concerned,
 - (d) the number of prosecutions instituted, and
 - (e) the maximum and minimum penalties imposed on the convicted persons;
- (2) given that the Government has, since 2017, allocated two sites located respectively in Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and in Siu Lang Shui, Tuen Mun for placing of idling skips, of the utilization situations of the two sites;
- (3) of the respective numbers of (i) inspections conducted and (ii) complaints handled last year by the dedicated enforcement teams set up by the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) for combating fly-tipping of construction waste; and
- (4) given that EPD launched, in February this year, a “HoHoSkips App” pilot scheme in Sham Shui Po District to facilitate members of the public and the renovation trade to book, through a mobile application (“app”), the service of collection vehicles for collecting small quantities of construction waste generated from renovation works, of the up-to-date number of downloads of such app and number of times for which the service has been used; the channels through which EPD promotes such service to the renovation trade; whether it knows the total quantity of construction waste collected so far through such service and, among such waste, the respective quantities of construction waste delivered to landfills and to public fill reception facilities for reuse?

Question 17
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Rodent prevention and control

Hon Wilson OR to ask:

Quite a number of members of the public have criticized that rodent infestation is serious in various districts across the territory, and that the Rodent Infestation Rates compiled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) have failed to reflect the actual situation of rodent infestation in various districts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that FEHD has, since the second half of last year, increased the number of survey locations for the Rodent Infestation Survey from 41 to 50, whether it has reviewed if 50 survey locations are sufficient; if it has reviewed and the outcome is in the negative, whether it will further increase the number of survey locations; if it will not, of the reasons for that;
- (2) of the latest progress of the application of new technologies or methods by FEHD for rodent prevention and control, including the new technologies or methods which (i) are currently being tested, (ii) have been proved effective after testing, and (iii) have been or will be fully applied in various districts; the new measures in place to step up rodent prevention and control before the relevant new technologies or methods are fully applied; and
- (3) given that some members of the public have relayed that the poor hygiene conditions in quite a number of districts have resulted in serious rodent infestation, whether FEHD will supervise its cleaning service contractors to step up cleaning operations at rodent and hygiene black spots?

Question 18
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Measures to cope with the epidemic

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok to ask:

Early last month, the first local confirmed case with an unknown source of infection with a variant of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 was found in Hong Kong. The Government has indicated that in the light of the higher transmissibility of virus variants and their potential for causing more serious epidemic situation, it will take the “vaccine bubble” as the basis in reviewing whether social distancing measures may be relaxed. Regarding the measures to cope with the epidemic, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has set up a mechanism for reviewing the pros and cons of adjusting the various social distancing measures in terms of preventing and controlling the epidemic as well as encouraging vaccination; if so, of the details (including the criteria adopted); if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has assessed if the current testing capacity in Hong Kong is sufficient to cope with sudden and huge demand for testing involving virus variants; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, of the details; if the assessment outcome is in the negative, the measures to increase the testing capacity;
- (3) whether it will enhance the function of the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile application of recording whereabouts to better tie in with the implementation of the various social distancing measures, with a view to cutting the virus transmission chain at an early stage; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it has explored upgrading “LeaveHomeSafe” to a digital permit with vaccination records that can be used worldwide, so as to prepare for the full resumption of cross-boundary travels; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 19
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Driving tests and licences

Hon Frankie YICK to ask:

To cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic, the Transport Department (“TD”) intermittently suspended the written tests and road tests of driving tests last year. Regarding driving tests and licences, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of new candidates and repeaters affected by each round of suspension of written tests and road tests and, among them, the respective numbers of those who have now completed the relevant tests, with a breakdown by type of the driving licences involved;
- (2) of the measures put in place by TD to arrange for the affected candidates to take the relevant tests expeditiously upon resumption of the tests, and whether TD has assessed the effectiveness of such measures;
- (3) of the latest waiting time for the written tests and road tests of the various driving tests, with a breakdown by type of candidates (i.e. new candidates and repeaters) and test venue;
- (4) given that TD has set service performance pledges that written tests and road tests will be held respectively within 45 and 82 calendar days from receipt of applications, whether TD will set better pledges to enable persons in need to take the tests and obtain driving licences as soon as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (5) given that the period for holding a valid private car or light goods vehicle driving licence required of an applicant for a commercial vehicle driving licence has been shortened to one year since 1 October 2020, whether TD has compiled statistics to see if the relevant number of candidates has increased as a result; if the number has increased, whether TD has increased the numbers of tests to be held and test venues to meet the additional demand; if TD has not compiled such statistics, of the reasons for that; and

- (6) given that starting from 1 October 2020, an applicant for a taxi full driving licence must have completed the relevant pre-service course within one year before submitting an application, of the up-to-date number of persons who have completed the relevant course; as some members of the taxi trade have relayed that the number of places offered for the course is insufficient, whether TD will increase the number of such places; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 20
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Employment support for persons with disabilities

Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG to ask:

Some non-governmental organizations have pointed out that persons with disabilities (“PWDs”) have faced employment difficulties over the years, and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic has aggravated the problem. For example, under the impacts of the epidemic and the Government’s directive to suspend the operation of massage establishments, there has been, since early last year, a significant reduction in the work for and income of quite a number of blind persons working as masseurs, but it is difficult for them to switch to other industries. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of (i) the number of PWDs who were employed, (ii) the number of PWDs who were underemployed and (iii) the unemployment rate of PWDs, in each of the past three years;
- (2) of the following information on the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (“WOPS”) in each of the past three years and since January 2021: (i) the number of placements recorded (with a breakdown by type of disability of the persons placed into employment, and the industry and type of work in which they are/were engaged), (ii) the number of participating employers, and (iii) the average amount of allowance granted for each placement;
- (3) of the respective numbers of applications for retention allowance, which were submitted by PWDs placed into employment under WOPS, received and approved by the Labour Department (“LD”) since September 2020, and the average amount of allowance granted for each approved application; whether LD has reviewed the effectiveness of the disbursement of a retention allowance in encouraging PWDs to undergo and complete on-the-job training; if so, of the details;
- (4) whether, among the 30 000 time-limited jobs created in the public and private sectors by the Government with funds allocated from the Anti-epidemic Fund, there are jobs created specifically for PWDs; if so, of a breakdown of the numbers of (i) such jobs and (ii) the PWDs employed, by type of disability of the persons suitable for taking up such jobs and type of work to which the jobs belong;

- (5) whether it knows if the Love Upgrading Special Scheme implemented by the Employees Retraining Board has provided courses designed specifically for PWDs; if so, of the following information on such courses under each tranche: (i) the number of courses, (ii) the number of enrolments, (iii) the number of trainees who completed the courses and (iv) the average amount of special allowance disbursed to each trainee who has completed any of the courses;
- (6) whether the Government has put in place other measures to assist PWDs who are unemployed or underemployed amid the epidemic; if so, of the details; and
- (7) of the measures in place to solve the problem of employment difficulties of PWDs in the long run?

Question 21
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Car parking spaces provided in development projects

Hon Tony TSE to ask:

It is learnt that in calculating the gross floor area (“GFA”) of buildings, those car parks provided with electric vehicles charging-enabling facilities at each car parking space may be granted 100% GFA concessions if they are constructed underground, but they may be granted only 50% GFA concessions if they are constructed above-ground. As a result, some works departments of the Government and developers tend to construct underground car parks. On the other hand, as the construction of underground car parks require excavation and waterproofing works as well as additional ventilation, lighting and ramps, underground car parks have higher construction and operation costs but lower energy efficiency and cost-effectiveness (more so for construction sites with a small area), as compared with above-ground car parks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of car parking spaces provided in the various public and private development projects newly completed in the past five years, with a breakdown by the types of vehicles catered for and the level on which such car parking spaces are located (i.e. underground, above-ground, and the first floor or above);
- (2) whether it has made a comparison between the car parks located underground, above-ground and on the first floor or above in terms of (i) construction costs and (ii) operation costs; if so, of the outcome; if not, whether a comparison will be made;
- (3) whether it will require developers to provide a specific number of car parking spaces only when it has assessed and confirmed, based on the sizes of the construction sites, that the provision of car parking spaces therein are reasonable and cost-effective; if not, whether it will consider conducting the relevant assessment;
- (4) whether it will review the calculation method for the GFA concessions to be granted for car parks provided at different levels within a development project; and

- (5) whether it will, through practices such as granting GFA concessions, relaxing the restrictions on storey heights of buildings, and changing the methods for calculating the number of car parking spaces that must be provided in buildings, encourage developers and private property owners to construct or convert to smart parking systems that are capable of increasing car parking spaces within a footprint?

Question 22
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Assisting young people in taking up employment

Hon Starry LEE to ask:

Although the latest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has declined from the peak of this year to 6%, the number of unemployed persons still stands high at 233 000. There are comments that the difficulties encountered by young people and fresh graduates in seeking employment should not be overlooked. On the other hand, the Government has introduced in recent years a number of work incentive schemes, including (i) the scheme under which around 60 000 time-limited jobs in both the public and private sectors are to be created with a funding of \$13.2 billion, (ii) the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme, which seeks to encourage and support young people to work and develop their career in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and (iii) a number of schemes that are run separately by several bureaux to subsidize private organizations to employ graduates of the relevant disciplines. On assisting young people in taking up employment, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following information on the jobs provided respectively by the aforesaid schemes for young people: the numbers of jobs, job durations, nature of work, amounts of public expenditure involved, as well as the details of the recruitment exercises (including the respective numbers of young people who submitted applications, have been employed and have reported for duty), together with a breakdown by the category to which their employers belong (i.e. bureaux, government departments, public sector, and private sector) and the name of their employers;
- (2) whether it will consider expediting the recruitment for the aforesaid jobs so that more eligible applicants can be employed as early as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will consider regularizing or expanding such schemes so as to create more jobs, thereby further assisting young people in taking up employment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?