

22 questions to be asked at the Council meeting of 13 July 2022

Subject matters

Questions for oral replies

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Hon LAM San-keung | <u>Collaboration between the Government and social organizations</u> |
| 2 | Hon CHAN Yuet-ming | <u>Disposal of municipal solid waste</u> |
| 3 | Hon Lillian KWOK | <u>Examination fees for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination</u> |
| 4 | Hon LAM Chun-sing | <u>Preventing employees from suffering heat stroke at work</u> |
| 5 | Hon Edward LEUNG | <u>Hong Kong citizens participating in the country's manned space programme</u> |
| 6 | Dr Hon Kennedy WONG | <u>Work on publicizing and promoting Hong Kong</u> |

Questions for written replies

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 7 | Hon LEUNG Man-kwong | <u>Flat size of subsidized sale housing</u> |
| 8 | Dr Hon CHOW Man-kong | <u>Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone</u> |
| 9 | Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung | <u>Collection and recycling of food waste</u> |
| 10 | Hon Holden CHOW | <u>Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme</u> |
| 11 | Hon Jeffrey LAM | <u>Small unmanned aircraft</u> |
| 12 | Hon YIM Kong | <u>Promoting the alignment of rules between Hong Kong and the Mainland on vocational qualifications</u> |
| 13 | Hon SHIU Ka-fai | <u>Financial position of the Government</u> |
| 14 | Hon Mrs Regina IP | <u>Combating acts of non-occupation of public rental housing flats by tenants</u> |
| 15 | Hon Elizabeth QUAT | <u>Enacting legislation to prohibit acts of insulting other persons</u> |
| 16 | Hon Frankie YICK | <u>Cross-boundary land transport arrangements amid the epidemic</u> |
| 17 | Hon CHAN Hak-kan | <u>Encouraging food donation</u> |
| 18 | Hon CHAN Pui-leung | <u>Handling of seizures of animals smuggled into the territory</u> |
| 19 | Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen | <u>Roles and responsibilities of Deputy Secretaries of Departments</u> |
| 20 | Hon Paul TSE | <u>Shortfall in public dental services</u> |
| 21 | Hon Doreen KONG | <u>Coping with rodent infestation</u> |
| 22 | Hon Tony TSE | <u>Infrastructure projects in new development areas in the New Territories</u> |

Question 1
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Collaboration between the Government and social organizations

Hon LAM San-keung to ask:

There are views pointing out that, for the new-term Government to achieve good governance, and to achieve smooth implementation of policies and effective resolution of the deep-rooted social problems in Hong Kong, various government departments need to collaborate with various social organizations, so as to jointly work for the development, business opportunities, and the well-being of the people. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the incumbent Chief Executive advocated, when running for the election, a “result-oriented” vision in policy implementation, whether the current-term Government has adopted such a vision in policy implementation; if so, how various government departments collaborate with various social organizations to jointly promote the adoption of such a vision in policy implementation; if not, whether the current-term Government is still retaining the “positive non-interventionism” policy;
- (2) whether the Government has conducted relevant studies on issues relating to collaboration with social organizations, with a view to tying in with national development and implementing reforms that keep abreast of the time; if so, of the details, including the government department(s) responsible for conducting the studies and implementing the reforms; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) given the long time and considerable amount of resources required for a legislative proposal to become a law, whether various government departments and social organizations have put in place collaborative mechanisms at present for the effective implementation of new legislation; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 2
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Disposal of municipal solid waste

Hon CHAN Yuet-ming to ask:

In the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035 (“the Blueprint”) announced early last year, the Government set a long-term goal of developing adequate waste-to-energy facilities, so as to move away from the reliance on landfills for disposal of municipal solid waste (“MSW”) and achieve “Zero Landfill” in around 2035. However, Hong Kong currently disposes of an average daily total of 11 000 tonnes of MSW through two existing landfills, whereas the Integrated Waste Management Facilities (“incineration facilities”) Phase 1 and Phase 2 under the Blueprint, which will commence operation in 2025 and the early 2030s respectively, will only be able to dispose of a daily total of around 7 000 tonnes of MSW. Therefore, the Government currently still needs to identify sites for the construction of Phase 3 of the incineration facilities, and to extend these landfills during the transitional period. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as Phase 3 of the incineration facilities is currently still at the site search stage, how the Government ensures that the target of Zero Landfill can be achieved in 2035; whether it will take new measures and allocate additional resources to advance the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the incineration facilities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has reserved expansion space for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the incineration facilities for raising their waste disposal capacity; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) as it is learnt that residents in Luohu District and Nanshan District of Shenzhen have incessant grievances towards the North East New Territories Landfill and the West New Territories Landfill, whether the Government has plans to review afresh the operation of these two landfills, such as deferring their extension plans or examining when they can be closed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 3
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Examination fees for the
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

Hon Lillian KWOK to ask:

The Government has, for five consecutive years since 2019, rolled out a one-off measure to pay examination fees for school candidates sitting the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (“HKDSE”). It is learnt that the measure is widely welcomed by school candidates and schools. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that when attending the meeting of the Finance Committee (“FC”) of this Council on 31 May 2019, the then Under Secretary for Education indicated that the authorities would consider the suggestion of regularizing the payment of examination fees for school candidates sitting HKDSE in the context of a comprehensive review of the operation mode and financial structure of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, and that the Education Bureau envisaged that the authorities would put forward specific proposals in about two years upon commencement of the review to seek the views of FC members and stakeholders on such proposals, with a target of completing the review within the subsequent two years, of the details of the relevant proposals and the current progress of the relevant work;
- (2) whether it will consider according priority to regularizing the payment of examination fees for those HKDSE school candidates with financial difficulties (such as the beneficiaries of the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme and the Community Care Fund Assistance Programmes); if so, of the details; and
- (3) in order to finish the “last mile” for free secondary education, whether the Government will regularize the payment of examination fees for HKDSE school candidates (including school candidates who are Hong Kong children studying in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area); if so, of the details?

Question 4
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Preventing employees from suffering heat stroke at work

Hon LAM Chun-sing to ask:

The Hong Kong Observatory issued a total of 116 Very Hot Weather Warnings from 2015 to 2019. Last year alone, the number of Very Hot Days even hit a record high of 54. On the other hand, the number of heat stroke-related work injury cases registered at the Labour Department (“LD”) from 2013 to 2017 was 100. On preventing employees from suffering heat stroke at work, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of heat stroke-related work injury and fatal cases registered at LD in each of the past three years;
- (2) given that the Inter-departmental Working Group set up by the Government conducted a review in 2020 on the improvement measures in respect of the remuneration packages and labour protection for non-skilled employees engaged by government service contractors, and it recommended in its review report that contractors be required to provide uniforms with dry-fit properties for non-skilled employees engaging in outdoor work in summer, and that measures on preventing heat stroke, such as provision of suitable work arrangements and supply of cool potable water, be included in the tender briefs as guidelines for good practice, of the latest implementation situation of the relevant recommendations, and the current total number of non-skilled employees who have benefitted from such recommendations; and
- (3) as the “High Temperature Labour Protection Measures” implemented by the People’s Government of Guangdong Province stipulate that where the temperature reaches above 37 degree Celsius to below 39 degree Celsius, the duration of outdoor work of employees at open areas shall not be more than six hours, and where the temperature reaches above 39 degree Celsius, outdoor work at open areas shall be suspended, whether the authorities will, by drawing reference from the relevant practice, enact legislation on employees working outdoors under very hot weather, including making it a statutory requirement for conducting the risk assessments as set out in the booklet “Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work” compiled by LD, as well as expressly specifying working hour limits and proportion of rest time for employees who work under very hot weather; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 5
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Hong Kong citizens participating in
the country's manned space programme

Hon Edward LEUNG to ask:

It is learnt that as early as in 2003 when the country's first astronaut sent into space visited Hong Kong, quite a number of Hong Kong youths were inspired, and embraced the aspiration of becoming an astronaut. In June last year, a chief designer of the country's manned space programme indicated that Hong Kong citizens were welcomed to participate in the manned space programme, and that technical preparation had been completed for the selection of astronauts in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of enabling Hong Kong citizens to participate in the country's manned space programme, whether the Government has discussed or will discuss with the relevant departments on the Mainland the selection of astronauts in Hong Kong for receiving training or working on the Mainland;
- (2) of the policies and measures in place for enabling Hong Kong youths who aspire to be involved in manned space programme to make early preparation for their development in this field, and for providing them with relevant support; and
- (3) as it is learnt that the country's astronauts are all military personnel while currently Hong Kong citizens cannot join the army on the Mainland, rendering them unable to become the country's astronauts even though they may be talents who have the ability to become astronauts, whether the Government will conduct discussion with the Mainland authorities on allowing Hong Kong youths who meet the requirements to join the army, so that they may advance towards their space aspiration?

Question 6
(For oral reply)

(Translation)

Work on publicizing and promoting Hong Kong

Dr Hon Kennedy WONG to ask:

It has been reported that on the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, the Government advertised, through the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office ("ETO") in Brussels, Belgium, on trams in Brussels to celebrate Hong Kong's return to the motherland. Although the content of the advertisement had been passed by the local transport company and the outsourced advertising contractor concerned, the advertisement was eventually pulled by the tram company due to the complaints from a group of anti-China netizens. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether similar incidents have occurred recently when other overseas ETOs of the Government are carrying out promotional work on celebrating Hong Kong's return to the motherland; if so, how the authorities follow up such incidents;
- (2) whether, in the light of the aforesaid incident, the Government has assessed the difficulties that it may encounter in its work on publicizing and promoting Hong Kong in future, and how it will deal with such difficulties; and
- (3) of its plans to introduce in detail the actual situation of the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland and the successful implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong to the international partners of Hong Kong through its overseas ETOs, and whether it will formulate key performance indicators for the relevant promotional work; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 7
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Flat size of subsidized sale housing

Hon LEUNG Man-kwong to ask:

The Government has, since early this year, included in the land sale conditions of residential sites a requirement on the minimum flat size of 26 square metres (i.e. around 280 square feet (“sq ft”)) in saleable area (“the requirement”), and will extend the requirement to all Government land sale, railway property development projects, projects of Urban Renewal Authority, as well as development and redevelopment projects carried out by private developers. However, the requirement is not yet applicable to subsidized sale housing projects. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has plans to extend the requirement to new projects of subsidized sale housing such as the Home Ownership Scheme (“HOS”) and the Green Form Subsidized Home Ownership Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) of the total number of subsidized sale housing flats under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) which will be completed in the current and coming three financial years, and among such flats, the number and percentage of those with a flat size of less than 280 sq ft; and
- (3) among the HOS flats under HA which will be completed in the current and coming three financial years, of the number of small units which are similar to those in Kai Yan Court, Kai Tak (i.e. flats of a size ranging from 186 to 189 sq ft)?

Question 8
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone

Dr Hon CHOW Man-kong to ask:

At present, the Hong Kong Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government are jointly developing the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone (“Co-operation Zone”) which is located in the Lok Ma Chau Loop and comprises the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (“the Park”) and the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the eight buildings to be built under the Batch 1 development of the Park are expected to be completed in phases from the end of 2024 onwards, of the following details of the relevant projects:
 - (a) the total number of those buildings for which construction works have commenced, and the following information regarding each of such buildings:
 - (i) names of the design/works consultant(s) and contractor(s) already engaged;
 - (ii) the detailed design, including the various internal facilities of the building, and whether such facilities are different from the original design proposal; if so, of the details and the reasons for that;
 - (iii) the latest progress of the construction works, including the expected timetable for completion, and whether the progress is different from the original schedule of progress; if so, of the details and the reasons for that;
 - (iv) the earliest time for innovation and technology (“I&T”) enterprises to be admitted to the building; and
 - (v) the latest arrangements for tenancy invitation, including the respective numbers, names and sectors to which the enterprises belong in respect of the building’s corresponding enterprises that have already signed contracts, that have not yet signed contracts but have preliminarily been approved for admission, and that are currently engaged in negotiation; the types of sectors and numbers of relevant enterprises which are the main targets

to be attracted for admission to the building, and the relevant terms and conditions for admission;

- (b) the total number of those buildings for which construction works are yet to commence, but the tender exercises for the construction works are now in progress or have been completed, and the following information regarding each of such buildings:
 - (i) the latest progress of the project;
 - (ii) the detailed design, including the various internal facilities of the building, and whether such facilities are different from the original design proposal; if so, of the details and the reasons for that;
 - (iii) the expected timetable for completion of the tender exercises and commencement of construction works, and whether these are proceeding as scheduled in accordance with the original plan; if not, of the reasons for that;
 - (iv) the earliest time for I&T enterprises to be admitted to the building; and
 - (v) the latest arrangements for tenancy invitation, including the types of sectors and numbers of relevant enterprises which are the main targets to be attracted for admission to the building, and the relevant terms and conditions for admission; and
 - (c) the total number of buildings in respect of which tender exercises for their construction works have not yet commenced, and the following information regarding each of such buildings:
 - (i) the latest progress of the project;
 - (ii) the expected timetable for completion of tender exercises and commencement of construction works, and whether this is proceeding as scheduled in accordance with the original plan; if not, the reasons for that;
 - (iii) the earliest time for I&T enterprises to be admitted to the building; and
 - (iv) the latest arrangements for tenancy invitation, including the types of sectors and numbers of relevant enterprises which are the main targets to be attracted for admission to the building, and the relevant terms and conditions for admission;
- (2) of the specific plans and proposals in place to implement the following policies as set out in the Joint Policy Package for the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone in the Loop announced last year:
- (i) measures to facilitate the movement of overseas technology talents;

- (ii) expanding cross-boundary investment and financing channels in the Co-operation Zone;
 - (iii) supporting I&T enterprises in the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone to finance through Hong Kong in multiple channels, and to engage Hong Kong financial services when conducting mergers and acquisitions in Hong Kong;
 - (iv) facilitating Shenzhen-Hong Kong sharing of data resources in the Co-operation Zone; and
 - (v) promoting the development and co-operation in respect of artificial intelligence and data analysis between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and exploring how to facilitate safe cross-boundary data flow; and
- (3) as the 2021 Policy Address has mentioned that the San Tin Technopole which comprises the Park will, together with the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone, form a 540-hectare Co-operation Zone, whether the Government has made detailed planning on the relevant support facilities in respect of housing, transport, healthcare, education, etc.; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 9
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Collection and recycling of food waste

Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung to ask:

Food waste makes up a significant amount of the municipal solid waste, and over half of it comes from domestic households, with the disposal of domestic food waste being on a rising trend in recent years. On the other hand, the Government has launched through the Recycling Fund the initiative “Solicitation Theme: Supporting Residential Buildings in Adopting Smart Bins Technology in Food Waste Collection and Recycling” (“the Solicitation Theme”) to assist the industry in enhancing its recycling capacity and efficiency. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the implementation situation of the Solicitation Theme;
- (2) given that some members of the industry have relayed that, as the authorities have been slow in the progress of vetting and approving the applications made under the Solicitation Theme, the industry is unable to dovetail with the Government’s efforts in waste reduction and recycling in a timely manner, whether the authorities have reviewed the reasons for such slow progress, and the improvement measures in place to expedite such vetting and approval work;
- (3) given that the \$100 million earmarked for the Solicitation Theme is only enough for subsidizing 40 applications (calculated on the basis of the maximum amount of subsidy of \$2.5 million for each application), whether the authorities have plans to increase the funding for the Solicitation Theme; and
- (4) given that according to the “Code of Practice on Separating, Collecting and Transporting Food Waste to Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1”, Phase 1 of the Centre can only intake food waste containing less than 20% by weight of inert materials (such as food packaging materials and oversized bones), whether the authorities have plans to lift such a restriction, with a view to increasing the food waste treatment capacity of Phase 1 of the Centre?

Question 10
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme

Hon Holden CHOW to ask:

Currently, eligible Hong Kong elderly persons who have moved to reside in Guangdong (“GD”) and Fujian (“FJ”) Provinces may receive the monthly Old Age Allowance (“OAA”), the Normal Old Age Living Allowance (“Normal OALA”) or the Higher Old Age Living Allowance (“Higher OALA”) through the Guangdong Scheme and the Fujian Scheme (“the two Schemes”) without being required to return to Hong Kong each year. The eligibility criteria for the two Schemes include the requirement that the applicant must have resided in Hong Kong continuously for at least one year immediately before the date of application (absence from Hong Kong up to a maximum of 56 days during the one-year period is regarded as meeting the requirement of one-year continuous residence in Hong Kong) (“the requirement of continuous residence in Hong Kong”). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that since 1 January 2020, the Government has, in view of the epidemic situation, implemented a special arrangement to enable applicants who have moved to reside in GD and FJ Provinces and satisfied all other eligibility criteria of the two Schemes but failed to meet the requirement of continuous residence in Hong Kong to be granted discretionary exemption for counting the days of absence from Hong Kong, of the latest details of this special arrangement;
- (2) of the respective numbers of elderly persons who applied for (i) OAA, (ii) Normal OALA and (iii) Higher OALA under the two Schemes in each of the past two years;
- (3) as it is learnt that in recent years, there are increasingly more elderly persons going to the Mainland for retirement, whether the Government will consider relaxing the requirement of continuous residence in Hong Kong under the two Schemes by allowing Hong Kong elderly persons who have moved to reside in GD and FJ Provinces and satisfied all other eligibility criteria to apply directly in the provinces where they reside for the allowances under the two Schemes, without being required to return to Hong Kong to complete the application procedure in person; and
- (4) whether it will consider extending the arrangement of the two Schemes to other provinces of the Mainland, so as to enable more eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to enjoy their twilight years on the Mainland?

Question 11
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Small unmanned aircraft

Hon Jeffrey LAM to ask:

Regarding small unmanned aircraft (“SUA”) (commonly referred to as “drone”), will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as it has been reported that incidents of clandestine photo-taking of members of the public (including public figures) using SUA occurred time and again in the past, of the specific measures put in place by the Government to track and monitor SUA that enter restricted flying zones and cause nuisances to residential areas;
- (2) given that the Civil Aviation Department (“CAD”) launched the SUA Advanced Training Organization Scheme in December last year and invited participation by interested training organizations and bodies to provide advanced training courses for remote pilots conducting higher risk operations, of the up-to-date list of those which have successfully applied to CAD for becoming a SUA Approved Training Organization, as well as the details of the criteria for granting the relevant approval; and
- (3) given the increasing demand of the public for SUA training, whether the Government will subsidize the public to receive the relevant training and launch official training schemes?

Question 12
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Promoting the alignment of rules between Hong Kong and the Mainland
on vocational qualifications

Hon YIM Kong to ask:

There are views pointing out that currently the vocational qualifications of a number of industries in Hong Kong and on the Mainland are in a self-contained manner with no interfaces, thus hindering the development of cross-boundary businesses and utilization of manpower resources by enterprises. With the country's promulgation and implementation of the "14th Five-Year Plan" and the further integration of Hong Kong into the overall development of the country, cross-boundary businesses and flow of talents between Hong Kong and the Mainland have been increasing, and the alignment of rules between Hong Kong and the Mainland on vocational qualifications has become more and more important. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has conducted systematic surveys and studies on the alignment of rules on vocational qualifications between Hong Kong and the Mainland; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it will set up a dedicated matching group to push the work of alignment of rules, and expeditiously promote mutual recognition of qualifications of practitioners in Hong Kong and on the Mainland in the financial industry engaging in the trading of securities and funds; and
- (3) whether it will consider, in respect of some industries in Hong Kong for which there is a shortage of talents, introducing measures under an "early and pilot implementation" approach to align the rules on vocational qualifications in these industries with those of the relevant industries on the Mainland, including mutual recognition of some vocational qualifications, and exemption for relevant practitioners from some subjects in qualifying examinations?

Question 13
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Financial position of the Government

Hon SHIU Ka-fai to ask:

It has been reported that the expenditure of the fifth-term Government increased substantially as compared to that of the fourth-term Government. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the three policy areas on which the expenditures (including non-recurrent expenditures and recurrent expenditures) of the fifth-term Government recorded the largest increases when compared with those of the fourth-term Government;
- (2) whether it has assessed if the expected effectiveness had been achieved under the circumstances of a substantial increase in the expenditures on the three policy areas involved in (1); if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether it has assessed if the substantial increase in the expenditures on the aforesaid three policy areas will impose a heavy burden on the finance of the current-term Government; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the reasons for that; if the assessment outcome is in the affirmative, of the details, and whether the Government has plans to introduce measures on generating revenue and managing costs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) as there are views that the Government may increase tax revenue to make up for the substantial increase in the expenditures, whether it has assessed the negative impacts that such a proposal will have on small and medium enterprises as well as Hong Kong's overall business environment?

Question 14
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Combating acts of non-occupation of public rental housing flats
by tenants

Hon Mrs Regina IP to ask:

In order to expeditiously cut the transmission chains of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 virus in the community, the Government first announced on 23 January 2021 the invocation of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to implement a “stay-in” testing order to cordon off a small area for commencing a restriction-testing declaration (“RTD”) operation. It has been reported that in a number of RTD operations involving public rental housing (“PRH”) estates, the Government deployed staff to visit PRH flats to request tenants to undergo compulsory testing, but quite a number of flats did not have anyone to answer the door. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number and percentage of tenants whom the Government could not successfully approach in RTD operations involving PRH estates as at 30 June 2022; whether it has followed up with such tenants to find out the reasons why they did not answer the door (e.g. whether they were unwilling to answer the door, unable to answer the door, not in Hong Kong, and did not often reside in the flats concerned); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether it has taken follow-up actions in respect of the aforesaid tenants who did not often reside in PRH flats, including recovery of the flats concerned; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether the Hong Kong Housing Authority will organize a task force comprising retired disciplined services officers to step up inspections of various PRH estates, with a view to actively recovering the flats left unoccupied by tenants, thereby releasing these flats to members of the public waiting for PRH?

Question 15
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Enacting legislation to prohibit acts of insulting other persons

Hon Elizabeth QUAT to ask:

There are views pointing out that a number of incidents involving insulting other persons have happened in Hong Kong in recent years. Such acts not only trample on other persons' dignity and damage their reputation, but also encourage the trend of bullying in the community. Moreover, it is learnt that quite a number of public officers, while discharging duties, have experienced they themselves and their family members being insulted. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the legal provisions that the authorities may invoke currently to institute prosecutions against persons who have insulted (i) other persons and (ii) public officers on duty; the respective numbers of the relevant prosecutions and convictions as well as the penalties imposed on the convicted persons in the past three years; whether such convicted persons include protesters who participated in the riots in 2019;
- (2) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of public officers who were insulted in the past three years while on duty, with a breakdown by the government departments to which such officers belonged;
- (3) as the Government indicated last year that it would study the scope of the relevant insult offences, of the progress of such work; whether it will, by drawing reference from the legislation of Macao, stipulate that it is an offence to hurl abuse at and thereby defaming another person, and that if the insult is directed at a public officer on duty, an "aggravated insult offence" will even have been committed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) as it has been reported that there are currently about 15 places in the world where targeted legal provisions have been enacted to prohibit insults to public officers on duty, and the Diet of Japan even increased in June this year the penalties for insult offences and acts such as online defamation and vilification, and yet Hong Kong has been discussing the relevant issues for more than six years at the least, whether the Government will expeditiously legislate against insult offences, with a view to safeguarding members of the public against insults and bullies as well as safeguarding public officers on duty; if so, of the details and the timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

- (5) of the Government's specific measures in place, before enacting legislation to prohibit acts of insulting other persons, to prevent such acts from becoming increasingly rampant, and whether it will step up publicity and education efforts?

Question 16
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Cross-boundary land transport arrangements amid the epidemic

Hon Frankie YICK to ask:

To prevent and control the epidemic, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government has implemented centralized transfer arrangements for cross-boundary land transport at Shenzhen ports since 14 March this year. Under the arrangements, Hong Kong cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers may only pick up and unload goods at designated transfer yards at the ports upon entry into Shenzhen. Some members of the logistics industry have indicated that the arrangements have brought negative impacts to the quantity and price of livelihood commodities supplied to Hong Kong and re-exported goods, and have caused the transport time and cost to double, which have greatly undermined the competitiveness of Hong Kong's logistics industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective volumes of air and sea cargoes re-exported by cross-boundary land transport in each month from January to June this year; the rates of change of such figures as compared with the relevant figures of the same periods in the past five years;
- (2) whether the authorities have conducted surveys on the changes in the time and cost of cross-boundary land transport since the implementation of the aforesaid arrangements, and assessed the impacts on the local logistics industry and the losses to the economy brought about by such changes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether it will consider requiring Hong Kong cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers to be subject to closed-loop management, and implementing the measure of affixing seals on vehicle doors to ensure that drivers are not allowed to get off their vehicles causally, in exchange for the Mainland's expeditious resumption of the original cross-boundary land transport arrangements; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 17
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Encouraging food donation

Hon CHAN Hak-kan to ask:

It is learnt that at present, quite a number of non-governmental organizations collect surplus or soon-to-expire food from commercial organizations and then distribute the food which is still suitable for consumption to the needy. Nevertheless, it has been reported that under the impacts of the epidemic, the amount of food received by some social welfare organizations has decreased by 70% in recent months, and there is also a shortage of food in food banks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as there are views pointing out that the implementation of municipal solid waste charging (“MSWC”) will increase economic incentives to encourage food sellers to donate surplus food to food banks or charitable organizations, or separate food waste for recycling in order to obtain exemption from MSWC, whether the Government has measures in place to educate food sellers on proper food waste separation, and encourage them to donate surplus food which is still suitable for consumption;
- (2) whether it will provide further incentives (e.g. tax concessions) to encourage food sellers to donate to non-profit-making organizations surplus food which cannot be sold but is still suitable for consumption; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) given that at present, quite a number of overseas regions have, through platforms set up via green applications, enabled food sellers to share surplus food with members of the public or sell surplus food at low prices, whether the authorities have formulated relevant policies and support measures to encourage local innovation and technology enterprises to develop those applications?

Question 18
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Handling of seizures of animals smuggled into the territory

Hon CHAN Pui-leung to ask:

It has been reported that 159 smuggled animals were seized in a joint anti-smuggling operation conducted by the Customs and Excise Department and the Marine Police on 18 May this year. Some members of the public have relayed that while law enforcement agencies have seized smuggled animals from time to time, the public have no way of knowing how the Government will handle such animals. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the total number of animal smuggling cases detected by law enforcement agencies in the past five years; the number of arrestees convicted, as well as the conviction rates; and
- (2) whether channel is currently in place for the public to learn about the housing and handling (including the specific processes) of animals seized in anti-smuggling operations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 19
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Roles and responsibilities of Deputy Secretaries of Departments

Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen to ask:

Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the three Deputy Secretaries of Departments (“DSoDs”) created by the current-term Government, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the specific division of work between, and duties of, the three Secretaries of Departments (“SoDs”) (i.e. the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Justice) and their respective DSoDs;
- (2) as the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration and the Deputy Financial Secretary will assist their respective SoDs in supervising the policy bureaux under them, of the details of the division of work concerned;
- (3) as the Government has indicated that the creation of the posts of DSoDs is for strengthening the Government’s top-level capacity to coordinate, how the three DSoDs will fulfil their roles of coordinating various government departments, including whether they will set up task forces for different inter-departmental tasks; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) how the three DSoDs coordinate among themselves; and
- (5) as the Chief Executive (“CE”) pledged in his election manifesto to set targets and key performance indicators for selected tasks within the first 100 days after the new-term Government took office, whether CE will assign the three DSoDs to carry out selected tasks, and set targets and indicators for such tasks; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Question 20
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Shortfall in public dental services

Hon Paul TSE to ask:

It has been reported that the Department of Health had a cumulative number of wastage of dentists at 64 in the past three years, and the latest vacancy rate is as high as 16%. Some veteran dentists have pointed out that in recent years, some private dental clinics have recruited dentists with a monthly salary of \$200,000 which, coupled with other causes such as retirement and emigration of quite a number of government dentists, has led to a high wastage rate of government dentists. The latest figures indicate that members of the public have to wait for 12 to 18 months for a general examination at government dental clinics, and the longest waiting time for treatments such as root canal treatment and fillings even reaches 39 months. Some members of the public have criticized that the waiting time is too long and unacceptable, especially for those underprivileged grass-roots elderly persons who have limited financial ability to afford the services of private dental clinics which charge exorbitant fees, even such elderly persons have the subsidy of health care vouchers. This, in effect, deprives such elderly persons of their right to receiving treatment. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the new measures in place, under the circumstances of a continued drop in the number of government dentists, to increase the manpower of government dentists and shorten the waiting time of members of the public for public dental services;
- (2) in view of the excessively long waiting time of members of the public for public dental services, whether it will consider subsidizing patients to receive treatments at private dental clinics through a “public-private partnership” model; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) in view of the strong demand of members of the public for dental services, whether it has studied the introduction of a policy on mobile dental vans for various districts; if it has studied, of the outcome, and the annual number of members of the public expected to be benefitted from such service; if not, whether it will immediately conduct such a study; and

- (4) as some members of the public have criticized that the current amount under the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme is insufficient for supporting elderly persons to receive private dental services, and elderly persons are forced to wait often for years for receiving government dental services, whether the authorities will study the feasibility of introducing elderly dental care vouchers, or the provision of other subsidies, so as to encourage elderly persons to use private dental services, thereby alleviating the pressure on public dental services?

Question 21
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Coping with rodent infestation

Hon Doreen KONG to ask:

Recently, a resident of a private residential unit has complained to me that rodent infestation is serious in the building, affecting residents' daily lives. Moreover, some members of the public have relayed that rodent infestation in districts such as Kwun Tong and Ho Man Tin has spread from public housing estates (e.g. Oi Man Estate) to nearby shopping malls, seaside areas, turfed areas, streets, construction sites, etc. It is learnt that rodents also appear in commercial buildings. On coping with rodent infestation, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) in respect of the rodent infestation problem at public places such as seaside areas, turfed areas and streets, whether the Government has studied new ways to cope with such problem; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will conduct such a study immediately;
- (2) in respect of the rodent infestation problem in different districts and different premises (e.g. private housing courts, public housing estates and commercial buildings), whether the Government has studied new ways to cope with such problem; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will conduct such a study immediately; and
- (3) whether it has plans to promote an across-the-board adoption of the following rodent prevention measures in private and public residential buildings/premises:
 - (i) installing rodent meshes at drain openings to prevent rodents from crawling indoors, and
 - (ii) replacing gully gratings on streets (especially those streets in the vicinity of open-air markets) by drawing reference from the experience of installing gully gratings with steel plates in Model Housing Estate in North Point, so as to stop rodents from crawling out from gully inlets?

Question 22
(For written reply)

(Translation)

Infrastructure projects in new development areas in
the New Territories

Hon Tony TSE to ask:

The Report of the Task Force on Land Supply, the Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030, as well as the election manifesto of the Chief Executive have all put forward the planning principles of “infrastructure-led” and “capacity creating”. However, many members of the public consider that, among the infrastructure projects being taken forward by the Government in various new development areas (“NDAs”) in the New Territories at present, the majority focus on the traffic, road and transport aspects, while little efforts are devoted to other infrastructure facilities which are needed for supporting a large population. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the sewerage and water supply projects under planning and construction for the purpose of creating capacity in various NDAs in the New Territories, and set out, by project name in a table, the following information: their latest progress, the projected population that they can serve (and whether they are sufficient to serve the population of the relevant NDAs), and the capacity reserved for expanding the development of the NDAs;
- (2) whether it has reviewed if the scale of the infrastructure capacity expansion projects under planning and construction can tie in with the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) in the light of the principle of infrastructure-led, what measures the Government has put in place to expedite the development of public and private infrastructure projects (including expediting the implementation of infrastructure capacity expansion projects which are not related to traffic, road and transport) in the Northern Metropolis, so as to achieve the goal of increasing the speed and quantity of, as well as improving the efficiency in, housing construction?