

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)140

Question Serial No.

1979

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under this programme, it is stated that the Department will take forward plans and projects to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities, and assist the Food and Health Bureau in formulating appropriate measures to enhance the regulation of private columbaria, including the introduction of proposed legislation for a licensing scheme. In this connection, please advise this Committee on:

- (a) the plans and projects in the pipeline to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities, as well as the manpower and expenditure involved; and
- (b) the details and progress of the work to enhance the regulation of private columbaria (including the scope of the licensing scheme for private columbaria, the intensity of regulation, the setting up of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board and the introduction of the Private Columbaria Ordinance), as well as the estimated expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. HO Chun-yin, Steven

Reply:

- (a) On public crematorium facilities, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) is upgrading the cremators by phases to increase their handling capacity. The re-provisioning of the Cape Collision Crematorium to provide ten new cremators and other ancillary facilities in two phases, at an estimated cost of \$696.3 million, is underway. The first phase has been completed in early 2013 while the second phase is scheduled for completion in late 2015.

On public columbarium facilities, the Administration has been promoting the district-based columbarium development scheme and identified 24 potential sites across the 18 districts for columbarium development to increase the supply of public niches. Of these 24 sites, construction of 1 540 new niches in the Diamond Hill Columbarium at an estimated cost of about \$0.76 million was completed in early 2012 while construction of 1 000 niches in Cheung Chau Cemetery at an estimated cost of \$4.8 million will be completed by late 2013. As regards the other sites, the Department has consulted the relevant District Councils in 2012 on the construction of 44 000 niches at Wo Hop Shek, 110 000 niches at Tsang Tsui, 20 000 niches at Tsing Tsuen Road and 200 000 niches at Sandy Ridge Cemetery. Construction works in Wo Hop Shek, Tsang Tsui and Tsing Tsuen Road are scheduled to start in 2015 for completion in 2017. The site formation and associated infrastructural works at Sandy Ridge Cemetery are currently the subject of site investigations and detailed design. The columbarium development at Sandy Ridge Cemetery is expected to start in 2019 (after site formation) for completion in 2022. The Administration is conducting feasibility studies on the remaining sites and will consult the relevant District Councils before the sites are confirmed for columbarium development.

The total estimated cost for conducting site investigation and detailed design of site formation and associated infrastructural works for development of columbarium, crematorium and related facilities at Sandy Ridge Cemetery is \$66.4 million. The estimated cost for developing columbarium facilities at the other three sites is not yet available. There is no separate breakdown on the manpower resources involved in taking forward plans and projects to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities.

- (b) Following two rounds of public consultation, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) consulted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Food and Environmental Hygiene in December 2012 on the legislative proposals about regulating private columbaria. The Administration is now working on the details of the legislative proposals with reference to the views and comments received. A Business Impact Assessment is also underway to collect views from relevant stakeholders. The current target is to introduce the relevant legislation into LegCo in the last quarter of 2013. The work on formulating policy and preparing legislation would be absorbed within FHB's existing resources.

Name in block letters: Clement LEUNG

Post Title: Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date: 28.3.2013