

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0890)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume I Page 252 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 28):

Under this programme, it is stated that the Department will continue to take forward plans and projects to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities. In this connection, please provide information on the following:

- (a) the details of the work relating to the plans and projects 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:

The information sought is provided as follows –

- (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 reprovisioning of the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide ten new cremators and other ancillary facilities, at an estimated cost of \$696.3 million, is underway. The first phase was completed in early 2013 while the second phase is scheduled for completion in late 2015.

On public columbarium facilities, the Administration has completed the construction of Wo Hop Shek Kiu Tau Road Columbarium Phase V in 2012-13, providing 43 710 niches. The Administration has also been promoting the district-based columbarium development scheme and identified 24 potential sites across 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 a cost of about \$0.51 million was completed in early 2012, while construction of 1 000 niches in Cheung Chau Cemetery at an estimated cost of about \$3.3 million was completed in December 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. Should we be able to secure support of the Legislative Council (LegCo) and the relevant District Councils, construction works in Tsang Tsui are scheduled to start in 2015 for completion in 2018, while that for Tsing Tsuen Road and Wo Hop Shek are scheduled to start in 2016 for completion in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The estimated cost for developing columbarium facilities at these three

sites is not yet available. We are currently conducting site investigation and detailed design for site formation and associated infrastructural works at Sandy Ridge Cemetery. 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 columbarium development at Sandy Ridge Cemetery is expected to start in 2019 (after site formation) and will provide 200 000 new niches by phases starting from 2022. The Administration is conducting feasibility studies on the remaining sites.

The Administration will consult the relevant District Councils before the sites are confirmed for columbarium development. 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 LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in December 2012 and November 2013 on the legislative proposals for regulating private columbaria. A Business Impact Assessment was conducted to collect views from stakeholders. The Administration is now finalising the detailed provisions of the draft legislation with a view to introducing the relevant legislation into LegCo by the second quarter of 2014. The work on formulating policy and preparing legislation would be absorbed within FHB's existing resources.