

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)091**

**(Question Serial No. 0799)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses  
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

Question:

Please advise on the estimated number of niches to be provided by the Government in the coming 10 years as well as their locations. Please also advise on the current average waiting time for a public niche, as well as the number of cases where the applicants have waited for more than 1 year, 2 years, 3 years and 4 years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (Member Question No. 35)

Reply:

Under the district-based columbarium development scheme, a total of 24 potential sites have been identified in the 18 districts for columbarium development. Between the second quarter of 2011 and the end of 2016, the Government has consulted the relevant District Councils (DCs) on the projects at 14 sites, and all DCs indicated support or no-objection to the projects. These 14 projects would provide around 589 000 new niches in total, accounting for about two thirds of the total number of new niches available in all the 24 projects. The projects at 2 sites, i.e. Diamond Hill (Wong Tai Sin) and Cheung Chau (Islands), have been completed. The projects at the other 12 sites are being taken forward. They are located in Tsang Tsui (Tuen Mun), Tsing Tsuen Road (Kwai Tsing), Wo Hop Shek (Phase 1) (North), Sandy Ridge (North), Chai Wan (Eastern), Wong Nai Chung Road (Wan Chai), Shek Mun (Sha Tin), Kwai Chung (two sites) (Kwai Tsing), Lai Chi Yuen Cemetery (Islands) and Siu Ho Wan (two sites) (Tsuen Wan).

New niches are allocated by computer balloting. Waiting list applies only to the allocation of niches returned to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department). The Department will invite applications from members of the public when new niches in public columbarium are available for allocation.

For niches which are returned to the Department after use, there is a waiting list for re-allocation for each columbarium. As at December 2016, the average waiting time for the re-allocated niches in the 8 public columbaria was 42 months. Information on the applicants' waiting time for the re-allocated niches is given below -

<b>Waiting time for re-allocated niches</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>
Less than 1 year	8 500
Over 1 year to 2 years	5 417
Over 2 years to 3 years	2 824
Over 3 years to 4 years	1 832
Over 4 years	5 707

- End -