

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)133

(Question Serial No. 0033)

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

Question:

The financial provision under Programme (2) in 2020-21 is estimated to be \$5,903.1 million, which is a 22.3% increase on original provision in 2019-20. It is mentioned that the Department will follow up proactively the recommendations in the Audit Report released in November 2019 and the Public Accounts Committee report concerned to further enhance the planning, provision and management of public toilets. The Department will also continue to implement the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme to improve the design and facilities of existing public toilets by phases. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. of the specific action to be taken to follow up the recommendations, whether additional funding and other resources will be accordingly deployed in 2020-21; and
2. of the funding allocated to implement Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, and the numbers of toilets (to be) refurbished in each of the past 5 years and this year; and
3. whether the Programme will be enhanced with reference to the recommendations (i.e. prioritising public toilets for inclusion in the Programme, and taking forward refurbishment projects in a timely manner). If yes, of the details.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is proactively following up the recommendations in the Audit Report released in November 2019 and the Public Accounts Committee report. With regard to the proposals of planning for public toilets, the Department will review its guidelines and criteria on construction and reprovisioning of public toilets. In reviewing the adequacy of public toilet facilities at tourist spots, the Department will continue to consult the Tourism Commission with a view to serving the needs of tourists. It will communicate with the Tourism Commission on a regular basis to listen to the views of the industry on the

refurbishment or facelifting works of the public toilets at major tourist spots. In parallel, the procedures of public consultation will be rationalised to minimise delays of works. The revamped electronic Contract Management System has been fully implemented since November 2019 to better monitor the management outcome of public toilets. Since March 2020, the Department has applied the newly developed mobile application “minor works order record system” to make repair requests to the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), as well as to track the progress and enhance the efficiency of repair works. It is also proactively planning to conduct surveys to collect the views of public toilet users and other stakeholders. The Department will continue to adopt new technology for headcount and review the utilisation rates of public toilets on a regular basis, so as to further enhance the planning, provision and management of public toilets. The expenditure for the review and planning of the above measures will be absorbed by existing resources, and therefore no additional recurrent expenditure will be incurred.

2. It was announced in the 2019-20 Budget that the Government would make an additional allocation of over \$600 million to implement the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, under which the Department will roll out the refurbishment or facelifting works for about 240 public toilets under its management by phases in 5 years since 2019-20, so as to improve their installations and the level of hygiene. The Department has been working closely with ArchSD to roll out the refurbishment or facelifting projects for 42 public toilets in the first year, with an estimated expenditure of about \$151 million. The facelifting works for 7 public toilets have been completed and the remaining works are underway as planned. The Department is preparing to commence refurbishment or facelifting projects for 49 public toilets in 2020-21.

The number of public toilets refurbished in the past 5 years is listed in the table below:

Year	Number of refurbished/facelifted public toilets
2015-16	19
2016-17	7
2017-18	9
2018-19	13
2019-20	41 [#]

Including 7 facelifting works as at 6 March 2020

3. The Department will collaborate with ArchSD to work out the priority list of public toilets for refurbishment or facelifting, having regard to their utilisation rate, locations, maintenance condition of equipment, and the time of construction or the time lapsed since they were last refurbished. Its objective is to shorten the timeline for a refurbishment project to about 2 to 3 years and about 1 to 1.5 years for a facelifting project (which mainly includes replacement of aged facilities and installation of new features, with the prevailing layout and exterior wall remaining unchanged).

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