

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)113

(Question Serial No. 1752)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department manages cremation and burial facilities, including public cemeteries, crematoria and columbaria, and will continue to take forward projects to provide crematorium and columbarium facilities in 2023-24. In this connection:

- a) please provide the number of crematorium and columbarium facility projects in 2023- 24, the expenditure involved and their expected completion time;
- b) further to the above question, please provide the estimated number of new niches to be provided in each of the coming 5 years; and
- c) further to the above question, what is the current waiting time for a new niche? Please set out the waiting time in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

- (a) & (b) The Government is committed to implementing the columbarium development plan. As at the end of 2022, 6 public columbarium projects located at Diamond Hill in Wong Tai Sin, Cheung Chau, Wong Nai Chung Road in Wan Chai, Lai Chi Yuen in Mui Wo, Tsang Tsui in Tuen Mun and Wo Hop Shek were completed, providing around 210 000 new public niches in total. These niches have already been open for application for allocation. In addition, the project at Cape Collinson Road in Eastern District, providing around 25 000 niches, was substantially completed in the end of 2022, and its estimated expenditure is \$791.7 million. The project at Shek Mun in Sha Tin, which has obtained funding for construction, is expected to be completed in 2025 and will provide around 40 000 niches. Its estimated expenditure is \$859.5 million. Furthermore, the Government consulted the relevant District Councils on the initial design of the columbaria at Siu Ho Wan on Lantau Island and Kwai Yu Street in Kwai Chung in 2022. The two projects provide around 33 500 and 68 500 niches respectively.

The Government will continue to take forward other new projects, with a view to securing a stable medium and long-term supply of public niches.

As regards the construction of crematorium facilities, the Government will continue to review the situation and take forward crematorium projects in a timely manner in response to the projection on the overall demand for cremation services.

- (c) In addition to the comprehensive allocation of public niches once a year, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department accepts applications from the public for niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium on a monthly basis starting from December 2020. About 1 700 niches are provided each month. After the implementation of the above niche allocation arrangement, there is adequate supply of public niches on the whole and applicants are generally not required to wait.

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