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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2021-22

Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Environment

Session No. : 7

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB001

(Question Serial No. S010)

Head: (22) Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Nature Conservation and Country Parks

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Dr LEUNG Siu-fai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question:

How many new hiking trails have been constructed since the handover in 1997? Will the Government establish a "Chief Executive Trail" of a scale that is comparable to the MacLehose Trail or the Wilson Trail?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) constructs various kinds of trails in country parks according to the environmental conditions and public needs, which include long-distance hiking trails, country trails, nature trails, tree walks, etc. The trails constructed after the handover in 1997 mainly include the hiking trails provided in new country parks, such as the Fitness Trail and the Pinewood Battery Heritage Trail in the Lung Fu Shan Country Park, as well as the Lo Fu Tau Country Trail in the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park. Besides, new hiking trails such as the Plover Cove Reservoir Country Trail and the Double Haven Country Trail have also been constructed to address different needs of the public.

As the current trail network in country parks has covered the majority of country park areas, there is no plan to construct new long-distance hiking trails extensively at present. The AFCD will focus the resources mainly on the maintenance, repair and improvement of existing trails to meet the public's needs.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB002

(Question Serial No. S008)

Head: (44) Environmental Protection Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Waste

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection (Maisie CHENG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question:

It is stated in your reply that legislative control of disposable plastic tableware will not be adopted until 2025. However, Mainland China, Macao and the European Union have already implemented a ban on plastic tableware. Why does Hong Kong lag far behind in waste reduction and plastic reduction? Is this really Hong Kong's pace?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

Of all the waste plastics disposed of locally in 2019, most of them were plastic bags which constituted about 33%, whereas plastic tableware constituted about 9%. As early as in 2009, the Government has taken the lead in implementing the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme, and was well ahead of certain neighbouring regions. The Government has also endeavoured to spearhead the promotion of a "plastic-free" culture through education and setting good examples. Since 2019, we have progressively ceased the provision of plastic straws and polyfoam food containers in most government premises and canteens while we have also stipulated the relevant requirement on the avoidance of use of disposable tableware when awarding new contracts or renewing existing contracts. We expect that 90% of the restaurants at government venues will cease using all disposable plastic tableware completely by the end of this year.

We note that the order of takeaways has been increased amid the pandemic. We have provided the catering sector and food delivery platforms with guidelines to encourage the restaurants to adopt various measures to minimise the use of disposable plastic tableware. If the use of disposable tableware is unavoidable, more environmentally friendly tableware made of non-plastic materials should be used instead of disposable plastic ones to help reduce waste plastic pollution.

We have planned to impose legislative control on single-use plastic tableware. However, as the relevant regulatory measures involve the use of disposable plastic tableware by the catering sector for dine-in and takeaway services, the catering sector has to procure suitable

alternatives (such as those made of paper or plant-fibre materials) and adjust their operational arrangements. Having regard to the local situations, we are inclined to implement a ban on the distribution of disposable plastic tableware for dine-in and takeaway services in eateries in phases with exemptions under special circumstances, so as to reduce the impact of the relevant measures on the catering sector and the general public. Although the cost of non-plastic disposable tableware is slightly higher than that of similar plastic ones, when such products are widely accepted in the market, economic benefits arising from mass production may significantly lower the price difference. We plan to consult the catering sector, the public and relevant stakeholders later this year for regulating the distribution of disposable tableware in phases, with a view to implementing the first phase of the regulation in 2025.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-ENB003

(Question Serial No. S009)

Head: (137) Government Secretariat : Environment Bureau
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified
Programme: (2) Power
Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Environment (Maisie CHENG)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question:

The request for enacting legislation to regulate light pollution has been under discussion for a long time, and the existing Charter is ineffective. To reduce carbon emission, save electricity, achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, and reduce the adverse impact of light pollution on the daily lives of the residents, please give an account of the target of the next stage of work and the timetable.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

The 2020 Policy Address announced that Hong Kong would strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. To this end, the Government will update the “Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan” in the middle of this year to set out more proactive strategies and measures to reduce carbon emissions. We will examine various means to reduce carbon emissions, which include exploring different types of zero-carbon energy and decarbonisation technology, enhancing the energy efficiency of both new and existing buildings, introducing more stringent energy efficiency standards, promoting zero-carbon vehicles and green transportation, and building large-scale waste-to-energy facilities. We will also develop green finance to boost investments conducive to reducing carbon emissions, and enhance public education and publicity to promote a low-carbon lifestyle.

As for external lighting, to review the effectiveness of the Charter on External Lighting, the Working Group on External Lighting appointed by the Government has engaged consultancies to conduct an opinion survey, to measure the changes of illumination level in different districts in Hong Kong, and to look into regulatory arrangements adopted by other cities for external lighting installations. The assessment is underway. The Environment Bureau will consider the next step having regard to the assessment results. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Department will, upon receipt of complaints against light nuisance, relay the complainants’ concerns and requests to the persons responsible for the lighting installations in question, and if applicable, advise them to refer to the “Guidelines on Industry Best Practices for External Lighting Installations” and take appropriate measures to minimise the impact of the lighting installations on the residents in the vicinity.

Most of the persons responsible for the lighting installations will, upon receipt of complaints, adopt measures to minimise light nuisance as far as practicable.

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