

## **Press Release**

### **LCQ8: Idle government sites and vacant government premises**

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Ms Julia Leung, in the Legislative Council today (October 16):

Question:

The Long Term Housing Strategy Consultation Document published in September this year recommends that the total housing supply target for the next 10 years be set at 470,000 units, with 60% of them being public housing. Moreover, there are views in the community that some of the government sites or properties currently left idle should be re-designated for public housing use. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of:

(a) the information concerning the idle government sites and properties fully owned by the Government and managed by the Government Property Agency (GPA) at present (set out in Table 1 of Annex 1);

(b) the information concerning the idle government sites and properties (e.g. vacant school premises) fully owned by the Government and managed by government departments other than GPA (e.g. the Education Bureau, the Housing Department) at present (set out in Table 2 of Annex 1);

(c) the information concerning the idle government properties partly owned by the Government at present (set out in Table 3 of Annex 1);

(d) the situation of idle civil servants quarters managed by GPA or the Civil Service Bureau (set out in Table 4 of Annex 1); and

(e) the number of properties managed by various policy bureaux/government departments which have been reviewed by GPA between 2000 and 2012 in respect of their utilisation, and the time required for GPA to review such properties (set out in Table 5 of Annex 1)?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been managing its land and properties in an efficient and cost-effective manner to optimise the use of public resources and site utilisation. However, individual government sites and properties may be left temporarily vacant due to different reasons, such as pending allocation to user departments, undergoing refurbishment and renovation, being reserved for land sale or other long-term development uses. There are some dilapidated properties which are unusable. It would not be cost-effective to refurbish them. They are therefore left temporarily vacant pending demolition and return to the departments concerned for redevelopment. These sites and properties are not regarded as idle.

My reply to the five parts of Hon Wu Chi-wai's question is as follows:

(a) Amongst the properties wholly owned by the Government and managed by the Government Property Agency (Agency), two are idle. Details are set out in Table 1 of Annex 2.

(b) According to the information provided by the Development Bureau, in general, to ensure the optimal use of land before commencement of their long-term uses, the Lands Department (LandsD) will grant government sites to private and community organisations by way of Short Term Tenancies (STTs) for different temporary purposes, or to government departments through Temporary Government Land Allocation (TGLA) for uses such as temporary works sites. For those sites which have not been released as STTs or used by departments under TGLA (such as vacant school premises returned to LandsD, sites with a rather small area or having an irregular shape), the Districts Lands Offices of LandsD will provide the relevant information of these sites to District Councils, District Offices, as well as District Social Welfare Offices for interested individuals or organisations to consider applying for leasing these sites for greenery, community or other purposes under STT. This ensures all sites are put to optimal use and not left idle.

(c) Amongst the properties partly owned by the Government, four are idle. Details are set out in Table 2 of Annex 2.

(d) The Government has currently about 23,800 quarters. About 0.1% of them are awaiting allocation to eligible officers or undergoing renovation/fitting-out

works while the remaining have all been allocated. At present, there are no idle quarters.

(e) During the period from 2000 to 2012, the Agency reviewed a total of 699 sites/properties occupied by government departments, with the aim of identifying under-utilised sites/properties to fully release their development potential. The Agency did not keep a record on the time taken to review each case. But generally about half of the cases were relatively simple and the reviews could be completed within two to four months. The remaining half were more complicated and the reviews could also be completed within 12 months.

Ends