

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)116

(Question Serial No. 2618)

Head: (91) Lands Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Land Administration
Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Ms Bernadette LINN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) In response to the recommendations made by the Director of Audit in Report No. 65 on the disposal of vacant school premises (VSP) by the Education Bureau (EDB), what follow-up actions will be taken by the Lands Department (Lands D) in 2016-17?
- (2) Besides EDB passing a list of vacant properties to Lands D, do other government departments have a similar mechanism for passing such a list to Lands D? If yes, please provide a breakdown by government department of the information on the government properties left idle over the past three years, including their locations, areas and the duration for which they have been left idle.
- (3) Please provide a breakdown by district of the information on each of the 29 VSP mentioned in Report No. 65 of the Director of Audit, including their location, site area and the duration for which they have been left idle.
- (4) Please provide a breakdown by district of the information on each of the 71 VSP with physical possession not delivered to the Government after cessation of school operation as mentioned in Report No. 65 of the Director of Audit, including its location, site area and the duration for which it has been left idle.

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (Member Question No. 58)

Reply:

- (1) The Education Bureau (EDB) and the Lands Department (Lands D) have agreed on the mechanism and procedures for handling vacant school premises (VSP), including VSP on sites where the leases provide the Government with the rights to re-enter after cessation/diminution of school use, and will strengthen communication and co-ordination under the mechanism in order to optimise the use of VSP as early as possible. Lands D will, as appropriate, continue to take suitable actions to recover

possession of VSP on sites for which there is a cessation/diminution of user clause in the land leases and VSP held on government land licences. For VSP on sites returned to or recovered by Lands D, we will make early arrangements to put them to suitable use. Where long-term uses have been identified and agreed within the Government, Lands D will arrange to dispose of the sites for the purpose. Where implementation of the identified long-term uses will take time or where long-term uses are yet to be determined, Lands D will try to put the sites together with the VSP to temporary uses, such as allocating them for use by government bureaux/departments, renting them out on short-term tenancy upon identification of suitable temporary uses, or including the VSP into the list of vacant government sites of the relevant districts for application by interested parties for greening and community uses on a short-term basis.

- (2) Lands D normally manages government land instead of built government properties. Under the existing mechanism within the Government, when government properties become surplus to requirement, the relevant bureaux/departments may pass the information to the Government Property Agency (GPA) for exploring alternative uses within the Government. According to GPA, in the past three years, a number of departments had sought its assistance in handling surplus properties. Examples include the Water Supplies Department's ex-staff quarters in Hong Kong East, Pok Fu Lam, Tai Tam Tuk, Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung; the Civil Aviation Department's surplus properties in its Headquarters Building on Lantau Island; the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's ex-Mong Kok Market in Mong Kok; and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department's ex-Headquarters Building in Causeway Bay. The areas of these Government properties range from 30 square metres to 13 000 square metres. As departments are not required to indicate the dates on which their relevant properties have become vacant when seeking assistance from GPA, GPA has no information in this respect.
- (3) Regarding the 29 VSP under EDB which were not being used as at 30 April 2015 as mentioned in Report No.65 of the Director of Audit, the land leases of four VSP do not contain a cessation/diminution of user clause allowing the Government to re-enter the land under the lease after cessation of the school use. The land lease of one VSP allows uses other than school use. For the remaining 24 VSP, information on the district, year of school closure and site area as provided by EDB is listed in the following table:

No.	District	School year in which the school ceased operation (Note 1)	Approx. site area (square metres [m ²]) (Note 2)
VSP that have been reused, reallocated or being planned for educational use as at end December 2015			
1	Southern	2013/14	3 300#
2	Southern	2011/12	2 000
3	Wan Chai	2006/07	1 600
4	Kowloon City	2003/04	3 000

No.	District	School year in which the school ceased operation (Note 1)	Approx. site area (square metres [m ²]) (Note 2)
5	Kwun Tong	2007/08	3 100 #
6	Kwun Tong	2008/09	3 200 #
7	Sham Shui Po	2008/09	1 300
8	Sham Shui Po	2007/08	1 200
9	Yau Tsim Mong	2006/07	1 200
10	North	2004/05	700
11	Sha Tin	2009/10	5 200 #
12	Sha Tin	2012/13	6 400
13	Tai Po	2012/13	5 800
14	Yuen Long	2012/13	3 050
VSP earmarked for educational use as at end December 2015			
15	Central and Western	2008/09	1 600
16	Hong Kong East	2010/11	4 300 #
17	Kwun Tong	2011/12	3 700 #
18	Kwun Tong	2010/11	2 900
19	Sham Shui Po	2013/14	3 700
20	Tai Po	1999/00	2 400
21	Tsuen Wan	2010/11	3 600 #
22	Tuen Mun	2010/11	5 300 #
23	Islands	2006/07	5 800
VSP under consideration as to the way forward as at end December 2015			
24	Kowloon City	2013/14	3 200

Note 1: “School year in which the school ceased operation” refers to the year the school premises ceased to be used by the original school on site.

Some of these school premises have been put to temporary use afterwards.

Note 2: The area of school premises standing on public housing estates of the Hong Kong Housing Authority refers to internal floor area of the VSP as marked with #. The site area of other school premises is a rough estimate based on records available to EDB and the figures are rounded to the nearest hundred m² and are for reference only.

- (4) Regarding the 71 VSP mentioned in Report No. 65 of the Director of Audit the physical possession of which had not been delivered to the Government after cessation of school operation, the land leases of 28 VSP do not contain a cessation/diminution of user clause allowing the Government to re-enter the land after the cessation of school use, while the leases of two VSP allow uses other than school use. In other words, the Government does not have a contractual right to re-enter the private land concerned on the grounds that the school has ceased operation. For the remaining 41 VSP, 26 are under EDB's purview and 15 are under Lands D's purview. EDB and Lands D will co-ordinate with each other in taking action to re-enter the sites for either reallocation for school/other educational uses or making other suitable uses of the sites, or in processing applications from the grantees/licencees for alternative uses as appropriate. Information on the district, year of school closure and site area of these 41 VSP is listed in the following table:

No.	District	School year in which the school ceased operation (Note 1)	Approx. site area (m ²) (Note 2)
1	Wong Tai Sin	2008/09	2 007 *
2	North	2005/06	7 643 *
3	North	2006/07	16 138 *
4	North	2008/09	6 875 *
5	North	2006/07	878 *
6	North	2006/07	4 146 *
7	North	2007/08	7 768 *
8	Tai Po	1996/97	3 472 *
9	Tai Po	1996/97	1 142 *

No.	District	School year in which the school ceased operation (Note 1)	Approx. site area (m ²) (Note 2)
10	Tai Po	1995/96	2 699 *
11	Tuen Mun	2005/06	1 854 *
12	Tuen Mun	2006/07	4 458 *
13	Islands	2003/04	223 *
14	Islands	2003/04	488 *
15	Islands	2006/07	Southern portion: 1 681 * Northern portion: 1 752 *
16	Central and Western	2001/02	1 000
17	Eastern	2007/08	6 500
18	Southern	2011/12	2 000
19	Southern	2004/05	1 500
20	Wan Chai	2004/05	11 200
21	Wan Chai	2000/01	2 100
22	Wan Chai	2006/07	3 000
23	Wan Chai	2006/07	2 000
24	Kowloon City	2007/08	400
25	Kowloon City	2008/09	1 200
26	Kowloon City	2012/13	2 300
27	Kowloon City	2008/09	1 200
28	Kowloon City	2008/09	1 700
29	Kowloon City	2013/14	3 200
30	Sham Shui Po	2008/09	1 300
31	Sham Shui Po	2007/08	1 300

No.	District	School year in which the school ceased operation (Note 1)	Approx. site area (m ²) (Note 2)
32	Sham Shui Po	2006/07	1 900
33	Sham Shui Po	2006/07	4 600
34	Yau Tsim Mong	2005/06	1 000
35	Yau Tsim Mong	2010/11	1 100
36	North	2006/07	2 800
37	Sai Kung	2008/09	41 300
38	Sha Tin	2012/13	6 400
39	Sha Tin	2008/09	5 000
40	Tai Po	2011/12	3 100
41	Islands	2007/08	6 200

Note 1: “School year in which the school ceased operation” refers to the year the school premises ceased to be used by the original school on site. Some of these school premises have been put to temporary use afterwards.

Note 2: The site area marked with * is provided by the Planning Department. The site area of other school premises is a rough estimate based on records available to EDB and the figures are rounded to the nearest hundred m² and for reference only.

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