

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**THB(T)033**

**(Question Serial No. 0099)**

Head: (60) Highways Department

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

Programme: (1) Capital Projects

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

In *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2016-17* under Capital Projects, it was stated that with the implementation of the phase 4 of the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme, 18 District Councils (DCs) would be invited to nominate not more than three walkways in each district. Please advise this Committee on –

- (a) whether there is a cap on the total expenditure of the items in each district? If yes, what is the cap?
- (b) whether there is a cap on the cost of each item? If yes, what is the cap?
- (c) whether the Highways Department plans to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council for all the items of phase 4 of the UA Programme in one-go or for each DC separately?

Asked by: Hon IP Kwok-him (Member Question No. 50)

Reply:

According to Rule 49 of the Finance Committee Procedures, special meetings of the Finance Committee are convened to examine the annual Estimates of Expenditure prepared by the Government in support of the Appropriation Bill. Expenditure charged to the Capital Works Reserve Fund does not form part of the Appropriation Bill. As such, questions relating to expenditure under the Fund are not relevant to the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure or the Appropriation Bill. Nonetheless, the information sought is provided below:

The Government is progressively enhancing barrier-free access facilities at public walkways under the UA Programme. Having completed more than 20 projects, the Government will press ahead with the remainder of about 180 projects in all 18 districts, including the three priority projects identified by each DC. It is expected that about 80% of the projects will be completed in phases within three years. From the fourth quarter of this year, the

Government will again invite the DCs to further nominate not more than three existing walkways in each district for the next phase of the UA Programme.

In January 2013, the FC approved the creation of a new block allocation Subhead 6101TX – UA Programme under the Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 706 – Highways to fund the implementation of the UA Programme. Under this Subhead 6101TX, each item is subject to a financial ceiling of \$75 million.

The Government will follow the established practice of respective block allocation and apply to the FC every year a block allocation on a lump-sum basis according to the forecast on the nature, scale and number of the retrofitting works for the coming year.

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