

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)070

(Question Serial No. 1683)

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (4) Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Daniel K W CHUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

A provision of \$839.6 million in total is allocated to Programme (4) Technical Services. "Matters Requiring Special Attention" under this Programme include improved streetscape and more greening, and the expenditure on vegetation maintenance for roadside slopes and expressways is increased to \$59.1 million. However, vegetation management at the relevant locations is frequently less than desirable, with vegetation growing in disarray. Please advise this Committee:

- (a) What is the frequency for routine works, such as inspection, vegetation trimming and watering carried out by contractors as required by the contract?
- (b) With less than desirable results, how will the department use the increased provision of the latest estimate to allocate more resources to enhance the vegetation management issue as stated above?
- (c) Will any study be conducted on a long-term plan to replace the existing management system with a view to improving the current situation of poor roadside greening? If so, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (Member Question No.43)

Reply:

(a) The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for maintaining vegetation on slopes under HyD's maintenance and within expressway boundaries^{NOTE}. HyD carries out vegetation maintenance through outsourcing to eight term contractors. The term contractors conduct routine horticultural inspections at least once every six months and carry out necessary horticultural maintenance operations such as pruning, pest control and removal of tree branches/whole trees which are hazardous to the public.

NOTE: Not including vegetation on roadside and toe-wall planters, and unleased/unallocated government land along non-expressway public roads. For roadside unleased/unallocated government land, the responsibilities of maintenance of vegetation are undertaken by other departments according to the nature and location of the landscaped areas.

(b) Facing ever-increasing public expectations regarding vegetation management and maintenance, HyD endeavours to conduct inspections and horticultural maintenance operations in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Government. For areas with vegetation requiring enhanced care, HyD will step up inspections and the frequency of horticultural maintenance work. We also carry out preventive maintenance or improvement work, including cutting overgrown grass and pruning protruding tree branches during the wet season.

(c) Tree management departments undertake the routine maintenance of the vegetation under their maintenance ambit in accordance with technical circulars and guidelines promulgated by the Government. HyD is not conducting any study on tree management system at the moment.

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