

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)029

(Question Serial No. 2941)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Daniel K W CHUNG)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The plans for 2018 are the same as 2017, including:

- (a) cleansing all footbridges and subways at least once per quarter;
- (b) inspecting/cleansing traffic signs, directional signs at least once per quarter;
- (c) inspecting/cleansing traffic signs, directional signs on expressways at least twice per year.

Since last year's reply (Serial No. THB(T)038), the relevant work carried out by the Department has still not reached the satisfactory level. In particular, the public continues to query why the frequency of cleansing busy streets by contractors as stipulated in the tender of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) (Head 49) is far higher than that of the adjoining footbridges or subways, and traffic signs blocked by vegetation or superstructures or covered in dust are still commonly seen. Regarding Programme (2) District and Maintenance Works, will the Government once again advise on the increased provision to be directly used on "road cleansing" out of the sum of \$113 million allocated for purposes including street cleansing in 2018-19; and compared to the \$69 million-odd in 2016-17, what is the actual year-on-year increase? Given the public concern, will the Government allocate more resources in the latest contracts to increase the frequency of cleansing footbridges and subways from once per quarter to twice a month as well as cleansing noise barriers, traffic signs and street name plates from currently at least once per quarter to once per month so as to be on a par with other departments in terms of cleansing frequency? Before increasing the frequency of cleansing, by what means could the District Councils (DCs) and the public offer their views on the definitions of "high usage footbridges and subways" as well as "busy road sections" so as to rectify the problem as soon as possible through increasing the frequency of cleansing for more black spots within the ambit of the Department?

Asked by: Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 29)

Reply:

Among the financial provision for enhancing road cleanliness and streetscape as well as greening of shotcreted slopes of \$113 million in 2018-19, the expenditure on road cleanliness is \$84.8 million (estimate), compared with \$69.3 million in 2016-17 and \$77.5 million (estimate) in 2017-18. This represents an increase in expenditure in 2018-19 of \$7.3 million when compared with 2017-18, and an increase in expenditure in 2017-18 of \$8.2 million when compared with 2016-17.

There is a clear and well-established division of cleansing work concerning footbridges and subways between the Highways Department (HyD) and the FEHD. Generally speaking, the HyD is responsible for the structural maintenance of the footbridges and subways under their ambit. To maintain these structures in good condition, the HyD will conduct thorough cleansing of the footbridges and subways at least once per quarter. In order to further enhance public cleanliness, the HyD also increases the cleansing frequency of some footbridges and subways under the new maintenance contracts commencing in 2018-19 based on past complaint records and the list of blackspots provided by the Home Affairs Department. The HyD will also take into account the views of the public and DCs regarding “high usage footbridges and subways” and “busy road sections” from time to time in compiling the list of black spots for more frequent cleansing.

On the other hand, the FEHD is responsible for the sweeping of the floor surfaces of all footbridges, subways and pedestrian structures including the removal of matters which have immediate hygiene problem like excreta of pets and vomitus. If situation warrants, the FEHD will also arrange localised washing to cleanse the localised spot that is associated with immediate hygiene problem. As the objectives of the cleansing work performed by the HyD and the FEHD are different, it is not appropriate to compare the cleansing frequencies set by the two departments.

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