

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB018

(Question Serial No. 1566)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Capital Projects
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

Some recent media reports exposed that the items under the “Universal Accessibility” (UA) Programme were halted because of reasons such as financial difficulties etc. of the contractor. Will the Government please advise this Committee of the following:

1. How many items under the UA Programme were currently behind schedule? What are the details;
2. Regarding those items that were halted or behind schedule because of the financial difficulties of the contractor or other factors, what specific measures will be taken forward to cope with the situation;
3. What are the average completion times of the items under the UA Programme (from planning till the commencement of works, from the commencement of works till they were available for use after the completion of works)? Are there any specific measures to speed up the progress in order to mitigate the impacts on the public?

Asked by: Hon CHU Kwok-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1. and 2. Under the “Universal Accessibility” (UA) Programme, there are currently 156 projects under construction, of which 147 items are implemented smoothly in general and proceed as scheduled. The remaining 9 items are delayed due to the unsatisfactory performance of individual contractor. The 9 items include the lift retrofitting works at HF76, HF138 and HS14 in the Eastern District, K64 in the Kowloon City District, KF73 and KF92A in the Wong Tai Sin District, KS43 in the Kwun Tong District, and SSP01 and SSP02 in the Sham Shui Po District.

As soon as it was observed that the 9 items were delayed due to the unsatisfactory performance of individual contractor, the Highways Department (HyD) immediately followed the established procedures in urging the contractor to

complete the remaining works as soon as possible, including issuing warning letters and “Adverse Reports”. The HyD also requested the contractor to suspend from tendering for road and drainage public works contracts. However, the overall performance of the contractor still did not improve. In order to complete the remaining works as soon as possible, the HyD took back the remaining works under the respective contract after seeking legal advice. The HyD then included these remaining works and other items under the UA Programme under a new contract and it was tendered out on 1 March 2024, striving to commence construction in mid-2024. Moreover, the HyD will strictly follow the terms of contract to recover from the contractor the delay damages arising from the delay of parts of the works, as well as the additional costs resulting from the above contract arrangement.

3. For the completed items, the average overall duration for investigation, design and construction of each item is about 5 years. When implementing the projects under the UA Programme, the HyD adopted measures to shorten the time required in dealing with underground utilities (UUs) during the construction stage, including the use of pre-construction works contracts to conduct ground investigations to identify the location of the UUs at an early stage; the adoption of a contract form of “Early Contractor Involvement” to allow the contractors’ active involvement in formulating plans to resolve issues relating to UUs at an earlier stage of the works. Besides, the HyD has also adopted Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) to retrofit lifts, and the on-site assembly work are carried out in an off-site assembly yard. This aims at providing more working space, minimising the impact of inclement weather on works progress, and allowing different activities of works to be carried out in parallel at both the construction site and the assembly yard, thereby enhancing the speed of construction. The lifts construction time is expected to be reduced by about 6 months.

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