

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2550)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (4) Technical Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

At present, the Highways Department (HyD) would install new village lights in rural areas or relocate current village lights subject to land development under the Village Lighting Programme (VLP) in response to the applications of villagers every year. The Home Affairs Department and various District Offices are responsible to collect and coordinate the applications from various districts. However, the installation of new village lights is slow and the progress of VLP is unsatisfactory. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) Over the past four years, what are the numbers of villages, the numbers of applications for new village lights, the quotas allocated for installation of new village lights and the numbers of new village lights installed in each of the 18 districts every year?
- (2) Over the past four years, what are the numbers of applications for relocating current village lights and the numbers of quotas allocated for relocating the village lights in each of the 18 districts every year?
- (3) Over the past three years, what are the actual expenditures or revised estimated expenditures of VLP every year?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

Every year, the Highways Department (HyD) would set the overall quota in Hong Kong under the Village Lighting Programme (VLP) for the installation of new village lights in rural roads in need depending on available resources. The HyD is also responsible for relocating existing village lights subject to land development needs. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) and various District Offices (DO) are responsible for collecting and coordinating the applications from various districts as well as prioritising them mainly according to the dates of applications for incorporation into the VLP for the implementation by HyD. The HAD would allocate the quotas of various districts on a pro-rata basis depending on the numbers of applications.

Before the new village lights are installed, the HyD and DOs have to carry out a range of preparation and follow-up works which include having face-to-face meetings with village representatives, applicants and relevant departments. Agreement from relevant owners are required if private lands are involved. The relevant departments are required to conduct mediation among opponents in respect of the dissenting opinions and consensus has to be reached before the installation works to be carried out. Regarding the questions asked above, in consultation with the HAD, the replies are as follows:

- (1) Over the past four years, the numbers of applications for village lights from relevant districts are listed in Table One. The districts that are allocated with quotas for installation of village lights are listed in Table Two. The districts that are installed with village lights and their numbers are listed in Table Three.

Table One: Geographic distribution and numbers of applications received for installation of new village lights over the past four financial years

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at early March 2024)
Southern District	0	1	3	7
Outlying Islands	40	30	12	18
Kwai Tsing	10	3	7	6
Tsuen Wan	18	0	0	12
Sha Tin	46	11	23	4
Sai Kung	10	18	19	64
Tai Po	64	107	9	20
North District	84	113	137	131
Yuen Long	155	200	230	242
Tuen Mun	34	17	6	79
Total:	461	500	446	583

Table Two: Geographic distribution and relevant numbers of quotas allocated for installation of new village lights over the past four financial years

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Southern District	1	2	3	1
Outlying Islands	42	38	33	21
Kwun Tong	3	2	3	1
Kwai Tsing	6	4	9	1
Tsuen Wan	8	12	14	8
Sha Tin	15	26	22	28
Sai Kung	43	42	34	35
Tai Po	71	63	65	103
North District	118	92	93	138
Yuen Long	191	200	209	217
Tuen Mun	34	46	48	47

Total:	532	527	533	600
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Table Three: The numbers and geographic distribution of new village lights installed over the past four financial years are tabulated as follows:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at mid-March 2024)
Eastern District	1	1	0	0
Southern District	6	3	0	14
Outlying Islands	26	27	48	58
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	1	0
Kwai Tsing	0	6	2	18
Tsuen Wan	14	8	3	32
Sha Tin	10	18	26	25
Sai Kung	28	38	32	60
Tai Po	27	85	99	81
North District	103	91	86	78
Yuen Long	139	171	135	194
Tuen Mun	23	8	4	16
Total:	377	456	436	576

Note: The numbers of new village lights installed by HyD do not tally with the quotas or numbers of applications of the same year. This is because the village lights may not be installed within the same financial year when the applications are received or quotas allocated. Therefore, the districts involved and relevant numbers in Table One to Table Three are not directly comparable.

- (2) Rural residents are required to provide justifications for the applications for relocating village lights for departments' consideration. The relevant applications do not have any quota limit currently. The numbers of village light relocated and geographic distribution over the past four financial years are tabulated as follows:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at mid-March 2024)
Southern District	0	0	0	1
Outlying Islands	2	4	1	8
Kwai Tsing	0	1	0	0
Tsuen Wan	0	0	1	3
Sha Tin	7	3	2	3
Sai Kung	6	3	1	0
Tai Po	19	19	14	10
North District	13	15	16	8
Yuen Long	31	33	20	37
Tuen Mun	2	2	1	0

Total:	80	80	56	70
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(3) The actual expenditures under VLP in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are \$9.057 million and \$15.466 million respectively. The revised estimated expenditure in 2023-24 is \$19.369 million.

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