



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
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Translation

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31 March 2017

Clerk to Public Works Subcommittee
Public Works Subcommittee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Sharon CHUNG)
(Fax: 2978 7569)

Dear Ms CHUNG,

Head 705 — Civil Engineering
Civil Engineering — Land Development

**758CL – Site formation and associated infrastructural works for development of
columbarium, crematorium and related facilities at Sandy Ridge Cemetery**

At the suggestion of the Chairman of the Public Works Subcommittee, we now provide a written response to the enquiries raised by Hon CHU Hoi-dick in his letter entitled “Re: Infrastructural works for the integrated funeral facilities at Sandy Ridge”. Having consulted the relevant bureaux and departments, we set out the consolidated reply at **Annex**.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Diane WONG)
for Secretary for Food and Health

Re: Infrastructural works for the integrated funeral facilities at Sandy Ridge

(I) Scattering of ashes as an alternative to interment of ashes in niches

- (1) With regard to the scattering of ashes at sea and in the Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs), please state the numbers of these cases and their respective percentages in the past 5 years. Please also advise on the Government's promotion efforts and the difficulties encountered.**

The number of green burial cases (i.e. scattering of ashes in GoRs and at sea) handled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) from 2012 to 2016 and the percentages of these cases are provided in the following table –

Year	Scattering of ashes at sea		Scattering of ashes in GoRs		Total no. of green burial cases (A)+(B)
	No. of application (A)	Percentage of total no. of green burial cases (A) / (A)+(B)	No. of application (B)	Percentage of total no. of green burial cases (B) / (A)+(B)	
2012	791	28.1%	2 023	71.9%	2 814
2013	797	25.3%	2 354	74.7%	3 151
2014	856	24.1%	2 697	75.9%	3 553
2015	877	21.5%	3 196	78.5%	4 073
2016	900	18.4%	4 004	81.6%	4 904

The Government is committed to promoting green burial as a more sustainable means of handling human ashes. To promote green burial, FEHD has devised new initiatives and deployed additional resources to carry out the publicity work which included arranging exhibitions, public seminars and talks, producing and broadcasting promotional videos, putting up posters and banners as well as collaborating with relevant non-governmental organisations.

It takes time for the community to accept green burial. After all, whether or not to adopt green burial depends not only on the wishes of the deceased person but also the preference of the bereaved family. While securing a paradigm shift in culture and traditions is by no means easy, we recognise the need for proactive and sustained efforts to fortify the necessary mindset changes. With persistent efforts to promote and improve the relevant services, we are confident that green burial will gradually gain public acceptance as the preferred way to dispose of ashes. This can be vindicated by our experience in promoting cremation over land burial. Before the 1980's, the predominant approach was land burial of the deceased, with cremation taking up only a small minority. The merits of cremation gradually dawned upon the community after a few decades of persistent public education. At present, land burial and cremation respectively take up about 7% and 93% of the annual number of deaths.

- (2) **Please advise whether the Government has considered or will consider opening up some areas in the country parks for the public to scatter ashes. If yes, please elaborate on the current work; if not, please give reason(s).**

FEHD currently manages 11 GoRs in 8 columbaria where the public can scatter ashes of the deceased. Based on the usage of the service of scattering ashes in GoRs in recent years, the relevant facilities should be adequate to cater for the future needs of the public for such service. Besides, FEHD will continue to identify suitable sites within its cemeteries, crematoria and columbaria for the construction of more GoRs. The Government has no plans to provide such facilities in country parks.

(II) **Public columbaria in rural areas**

Please advise whether there are still public columbaria under FEHD in rural areas which are for the exclusive use of indigenous villagers. If yes, please advise on their utilisation; if not, please elaborate on the situation.

At present, the niches in FEHD's Cheung Chau Columbarium, Peng Chau Columbarium and Lamma Island Columbarium in the Islands District are allocated to indigenous villagers or bona fide residents residing continuously for a long period of time in the Islands District. As at end of February 2017, the utilisation of niches in these columbaria is as follows –

	Cheung Chau	Peng Chau	Lamma Island
Number of niches allocated	2 985	439	86
Number of niches available for allocation	350	51	404
Total number of niches	3 335	490	490

Note:

- (1) The Peng Chau Columbarium Extension scheduled for completion in 2017 will provide about 360 new niches.
- (2) The Cheung Chau Columbarium Extension scheduled for completion in 2018 will provide about 1 250 new niches.

(III) District-based columbarium development scheme

- (1) **Please advise whether the Government has considered slightly scaling down the size of the project at Sandy Ridge, or at least carrying out the project in phases, depending on future development, instead of constructing all 200 000 niches in one go. In fact, in the North District, there will be 44 000 niches to be provided at the Wo Hop Shek (Phase I) project, as well as possible supply from Fung Ying Seen Koon despite it is not certain if it can be obtain a licence. The North District's commitment to the supply of niches is far greater than that of any other districts. Residents of the North District may find this rather unfair to them.**

The present item submitted for deliberation by the Public Works Subcommittee is on the application for funding for site formation, associated road works and ancillary works for the proposed columbarium development at Sandy Ridge Cemetery.

At this stage, the details of the construction works of the columbarium project are yet to be finalised. We anticipate that the columbarium project, which could provide some 200 000 niches, will be carried out in phases, with the niches to be allocated by phases as well. We will closely monitor the situation after the commencement of operation of the columbarium, and will timely review the allocation plan of the niches and the relevant measures

(including the arrangements for crowd control, traffic control and the burning of joss sticks and paper offerings, etc.).

- (2) **I thank FEHD for providing the supplementary information requested by the Chairman of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in its written reply (LC Paper No. CB(2)761/16-17(01)). However, I would like to have a more clear and holistic picture. With regard to the 24 sites, please complete the table below:**

District	Location	Number of niches	Progress	Date of completion

Please refer to **Annex** for the information sought.

- (3) **Please advise on the projected demand for niches in Hong Kong at present and for the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.**

The information sought is provided as follows –

	Annual average number of deaths (projection)	Annual average number of cremations (projection)
2017-2021	50 600	47 300
2022-2026	54 800	51 900
2027-2031	60 000	57 000
2032-2036	66 900	63 600

The prevailing practice after cremation is to store ashes in niches of columbaria. For ease of calculation, the estimated demand for niches is assumed to be similar to the estimated number of cremations.

(IV) Consideration given to NT North Development

I noted that the concept of “New Territories (NT) North Development” was not available when the planning for the Sandy Ridge project began. According to the map, the Sandy Ridge facilities are just 1 kilometre away from the proposed residential area at Hung Lung Hang, and the planning intention of the nearby Man Kam To area is Logistics Corridor.

Given that the scale of the “NT North Development” is very large, with a population reaching 250 000 to 350 000 and a working population of over 200 000, would the Government update the impacts on environment and traffic, etc. which might residents of NT North due to the Sandy Ridge project after the concept of “NT North Development” has rolled out?

For the Sandy Ridge project, the Government has completed the traffic impact assessment and, in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), the environmental impact assessment. The assessments indicated that the Sandy Ridge project is feasible from traffic and environmental aspects.

The “NT North Study” is a only preliminary feasibility study. The broad land use plans proposed therein are currently preliminary concepts only, and have been included in the “Hong Kong 2030+” study for public consultation. Upon completion of the “Hong Kong 2030+” study, the Government will determine the next steps for the NT North Development taking into account the views collected. Detailed planning and engineering studies would be carried out (including environmental impact assessment, traffic impact assessment and conducting public consultation) at appropriate timing.

Chronologically, the planning of the Sandy Ridge project is earlier than the “NT North Study”. In general, when the Government carries out the environmental impact assessment and traffic impact assessment in the planning and engineering studies for the NT North in future, the Sandy Ridge project would be treated as a committed project and would be included in the scope of such studies for comprehensive assessment.

(V) NT North East regional environmental impact assessment

Similar to situation at Tsang Tsui, in the NT North East, apart from the existing slaughterhouse, water treatment works and sewage treatment works, there is also the expansion of the North East NT Landfill in recent years, as well as the asphalt plant at Man Kam To Road. Together with the existing Sha Ling Livestock Waste Composting Plant, the future wholesale poultry market, the Liantang Boundary Control Point, and the opening of the Closed Area (which allow more commercial facilities at the boundary), etc., and with a population reaching 420 000 to 520 000 in the NT North East and the NT North Developments, would the

Government prepare a NT North East regional environmental impact assessment and consult residents in the North District?

The Government has taken into account local conditions of the NT North and its adjoining areas, including the existing/planned/possible transport and infrastructure networks, in formulating the strategic planning framework and broad land use concepts.

As mentioned in the reply to question (4) above, upon completion of the “Hong Kong 2030+” study, the Government will determine the next steps for the NT North Development taking into account the views collected, and carry out relevant studies and assessments.

(VI) Traffic impact assessment

Please advise the amount of additional traffic flows at Man Kam To Road and relevant roads during special days when the Sandy Ridge facilities are in full operation. Would there be potential conflicts with the planning intention of the proposed Logistics Corridor to be constructed at Man Kam To Road?

When all the 200 000 niches in the Sandy Ridge columbarium have been allocated, it is anticipated that there will be additional traffic flow of about 500 passenger car unit¹ per hour at the northern lane of Man Kam To Road at peak hours during Ching Ming and Chung Yeung festive periods.

Man Kam To Logistics Corridor is one of the potential development areas in the “NT North Study”. As mentioned in the reply to question (4) above, the proposed broad land use plans are currently preliminary concepts only, which have been included in the “Hong Kong 2030+” study for public consultation. Upon completion of the “Hong Kong 2030+” study, the Government will determine the next steps for the NT North development taking into account the views collected, and carry out relevant studies and assessments.

¹ Passenger car unit (pcu) is a unit for measuring traffic flow in equivalent number of private cars. For example, a pcu value of 1.0 is assigned to private cars and taxis. Heavy vehicles such as goods vehicles or buses which usually travel at a lower speed are assigned higher pcu values.

24 potential sites for public columbarium developments

	District	Location	Approx. number of niches	Progress	Actual / Target Commissioning Year
1	Wong Tai Sin	Diamond Hill Columbarium extension	1 540	Completed	2012
2	Islands	Cheung Chau Cemetery extension	1 000	Completed	2013
			1 250	Works will commence in Sep 2017.	2018
3	Tuen Mun	Part of the Tsang Tsui ash lagoon next to Black Point Power Station	160 000	Works have commenced in early Jul 2016	2019
4	North	Surplus coffin burial grounds and other land within the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery	Phase I: 44 000 Phase II: 35 000 Phase III: 25 000	Works for Phase I have commenced in end Dec 2016 Timetable for Phases II and III to be confirmed	2019 (Phase I)
5	Islands	Mui Wo Lai Chi Yuen Cemetery extension	780	Consultation with IsDC has been completed	To be confirmed
6	Eastern	A site on Cape Collinson Road opposite the Chai Wan Chinese Permanent Cemetery Columbarium and next to Wan Tsui Estate Park	25 000	Consultation with EDC on traffic impact assessment (TIA) has been completed. Consultation with EDC on initial design will be conducted	To be confirmed
7	Kwai Tsing	A site on Tsing Tsuen Road near the Tsuen Wan Chinese Permanent Cemetery	20 000	Proposed to be developed by the Board of Management of the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries	To be confirmed
8	Sha Tin	A site on On Hing Lane, Shek Mun, next to Shatin Transfer Station	40 000	Consultation with STDC on TIA has been completed. Consultation with STDC on initial design will be conducted	To be confirmed

	District	Location	Approx. number of niches	Progress	Actual / Target Commissioning Year
9	North	Undeveloped areas within the Sandy Ridge Cemetery	200 000	Consultation with NDC on site formation and infrastructure works has been completed To consult PWSC on site formation and infrastructure works	To be confirmed
10 & 11	Kwai Tsing	Site at the Ex-Kwai Chung Incineration Plant at Kwai Yu Street and Site on Kwai Tai Road, southeast of Ex-Kwai Chung Incineration Plant	68 500	Consultation with K&TDC on TIA has been completed. Consultation with K&TDC on initial design will be conducted	To be confirmed
12	Sha Tin	Fu Shan Columbarium Extension	Not applicable	The Panel was informed via FHB's letter dated 17 May 2016 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1531/15-16(01) that the Government decided to use the site at Fu Shan for reprovisioning of the Fu Shan Public Mortuary	Not applicable
13	Wan Chai	Hong Kong Cemeteries and Crematoria Office (part) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department at Wong Nai Chung Road	855	Works will commence in end 2017	2018
14	Central/Western	Site at Mount Davis Road, east of Chiu Yuen Cemetery	To be confirmed	Consultation with CWDC is being planned	To be confirmed
15	Sham Shui Po	Site at north of Ching Cheung Road near Roman Catholic Cemetery	To be confirmed	Consultation with SSPDC is being planned	To be confirmed
16	Kwun Tong	Site next to the Ex-Ma Yau Tong Central Landfill	To be confirmed	Consultation with KTDC is being planned	To be confirmed

	District	Location	Approx. number of niches	Progress	Actual / Target Commissioning Year
17	Yau Tsim Mong	Former school within Tin Hau Temple on Temple Street	To be confirmed	Consultation with YTMDC is being planned	To be confirmed
18	Tsuen Wan	Site located at the eastern end of Sham Shui Kok Drive, Siu Ho Wan, North Lantau	10 300	Consultation with TWDC on TIA has been completed. Consultation with TWDC on initial design will be conducted	To be confirmed
19	Tsuen Wan	Site located at the western end of Sham Shui Kok Drive, Siu Ho Wan, North Lantau	15 700	Consultation with TWDC on TIA has been completed. Consultation with TWDC on initial design will be conducted	To be confirmed
20	Yuen Long	Site between San Tam Road and Mai Po Lung Road, San Tin	To be confirmed	Consultation with YLDC is being planned	To be confirmed
21	Tai Po	Site at the southwestern corner of the Shuen Wan Ex-Landfill, near Tai Po Industrial Estate	To be confirmed	Consultation with TPDC on TIA will be conducted	To be confirmed
22	Southern	Site adjoining the Chinese Christian Cemetery at Pok Fu Lam	To be confirmed	Consultation with SDC is being planned	To be confirmed
23	Sai Kung	Site at Area 132, Tseung Kwan O, near the Tseung Kwan O Chinese Permanent Cemetery	To be confirmed	Consultation with SKDC is being planned	To be confirmed
24	Kowloon City	A vacant staff quarter (part thereof) inside a funeral parlour at 6 Cheong Hang Road, Hung Hom	To be confirmed	Consultation with KCDC is being planned	To be confirmed