

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)261

(Question Serial No. 5937)

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:

It is stated in the Estimates that the Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the maintenance of all public roads. There are quite a number of roads in the territory with damaged surfaces or defects, including openings, cracks or unevenness, posing danger to cyclists in particular. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (i) What were the total expenditure and the average expenditure per kilometre (km) for maintenance of public roads over the past three years?
- (ii) Does the Government have any dedicated staff for carrying out regular inspections of road conditions as well as handling maintenance tasks? If so, what are the details (including the number, establishment, ranks and situations at work of the staff concerned);
- (iii) It is a common phenomenon for road surfaces to remain uneven after repairs. What are the methods of repairs currently adopted by the Government and what is the expenditure on road repairs?
- (iv) In undertaking planning, paving or repairs for surfaces of tracks, especially road surfaces, has the Government taken into consideration the safety and needs of cyclists (e.g. introducing methods of repairs that can fully level the openings, cracks or uneven surfaces)? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wing-hang, Dennis (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 136)

Reply:

- (i)
The total expenditure and the average expenditure per km for maintenance of public roads by the HyD over the past three years are as follows –

Year	Total Expenditure (\$)	Average Expenditure (\$ per km)
2015	\$921.1 million	\$438,000
2016	\$955.7 million	\$454,000
2017	\$1,022.9 million	\$484,000

(ii)

The HyD currently arranges contractors through eight maintenance contracts to conduct regular inspection of public roads in the territory and make timely arrangement for repairs to wear and tear as well as damaged road surfaces. The HyD is also responsible for supervising the contractors' work. As at 31 March 2017, the HyD has an establishment of 1 005 staff members under the Programme of District and Maintenance Works, who are tasked with district administration and highway maintenance works. District administration works involve commenting on road matters related to land sale, public and private sector development plans and provision of access, as well as the implementation of minor road improvement works. Road maintenance includes regular road inspections, planning and managing road maintenance programme, supervising maintenance works, handling public complaints, managing the emergency control centres to deal with emergency matters such as landslips, washouts and fallen trees, as well as co-ordination of excavation works carried out by public utilities. Road inspections for public roads and handling of maintenance works are only part of the district administration and maintenance works. There is no separate breakdown of the staff establishment for road inspections for public roads and handling of maintenance works.

(iii) & (iv)

The work of road maintenance can roughly be divided into "corrective repairs" and "planned maintenance". Corrective repair works cover rectification of defects identified through reports received, or regular visits and inspections to restore the road surfaces to normal and safe conditions as soon as possible. Corrective repair works mainly involve works such as patching of pot holes or small-scale repairs to road surfaces. On the other hand, planned maintenance is preventive in nature, the priorities and programmes of which are determined on the basis of the design standard and current conditions of individual highway facilities, as well as the quality and durability of the materials used. The aim of planned maintenance works is to allow more comprehensive rehabilitation works so as to bring about long-lasting improvement when the facilities show signs of partial wear and tear, but yet to develop into extensive serious defects. Such works are usually of a larger scale and take more time to complete.

In general, for defects such as uneven road surfaces, pot holes, etc., the HyD will use bituminous material or rapid hardening material as patching substance to rectify the defective road surfaces as soon as possible, so as to maintain the road in safe and proper conditions for public use, including cyclists. When the HyD plans for road maintenance, it

will take into account the overall road usage, anticipated rate of wear and tear, as well as impacts on roads nearby and the environment.

In view of the constraints brought about by traffic and construction noise, the HyD has proactively conducted research into various methods of maintenance and repairs, including employment of thermal patcher, precast concrete panels, rapid hardening concrete, and stone mastic asphalt with polymer modified bitumen, etc. for more effective road maintenance.

As regards the expenditure on road maintenance, please refer to the reply in (i) above.

– End –