

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB023

(Question Serial No. 2713)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

In Hong Kong, the conditions of quite a number of roads are unsatisfactory. The road surfaces are commonly seen with crackages and even holes. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

1. The Highways Department indicated that the completion rate of repairing holes on road surfaces within 24 hours is 100%. However, there are still holes on the road surfaces in various districts. Did the Government review the reliability of the criteria?
2. What are the public expenditures on repairing road surfaces in 2023? What are the estimated expenditures reserved for repairing road surfaces in 2024?
3. Some members of the public reflected that heavy vehicles would damage the road surface, resulting in an uneven road surface. Did the Government study the use of new materials for road paving to improve their durability? If yes, what is the progress of the study? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the public roads and ancillary road facilities within its ambit. It has in place a regular road inspection mechanism through which term contractors are engaged to carry out the relevant works. When damages of road surfaces or ancillary road facilities are identified during regular road inspections or are reported by the public, the HyD will request the contractors to repair any damages that might cause road safety concerns as soon as possible. According to the work records of the contractors, all repair works on potholes on road surfaces over the past year were completed within 24 hours.

The HyD has stipulated a strict mechanism in the works contracts to monitor the working performance of contractors. The contractors are requested to submit works records in compliance with the contract requirements after completing the relevant works, including

information such as site photos before and after the repair works etc. The HyD would review the relevant work records or reports to ensure that the repair works complies with the requirements of the maintenance contracts and are completed within the required time. The HyD would also arrange random checks on the contractors' works. In case their works do not meet the stipulated standard, the HyD would take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with the requirements of the contracts and established mechanisms. Moreover, the HyD would continue to strictly monitor the working performance of the contractors to ensure that the contractors record all damages according to the relevant requirements when conducting regular and detailed inspections, and complete the repair works in a timely manner.

2. The expenditure on road reconstruction, rehabilitation and resurfacing in 2023 is approximately \$651 million and the expenditure estimate reserved for relevant works in 2024 is approximately \$618 million. The expenditure in 2023 is relatively higher because emergency recovery works had to be carried out in numerous locations after the impact of typhoons and mega black rainstorms in that year.
3. The HyD has been striving to study road paving materials that would be more durable so as to minimise the frequency of maintenance works and the inconvenience caused to the public during maintenance. For example, from 2018 to 2022, the HyD conducted trials on a more durable bituminous paving material – “Highly Modified Stone Mastic Asphalt” on over 30 busy road sections, which was researched and developed in collaboration with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The trial result confirmed that this new bituminous paving material has better anti-deformation, anti-aging and anti-fatigue performance than the existing bituminous materials, as well as improving the durability of the roads and reducing the frequency of road surface maintenance. This new bituminous paving material was formally used on road maintenance works in 2023 and more than 70 road sections are using it currently.

- End -