

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)104

(Question Serial No. 0404)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

While optimising the allocation mechanism, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is expected to allocate niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI in Fanling, Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium in Eastern District and Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin in a similar manner to the monthly allocation method of Tsang Tsui Columbarium by the first half of 2026. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) What is the latest implementation progress of the above optimised allocation mechanism? When will the new monthly allocation model be launched? What are the respective numbers of niches expected to be set aside each month from the above three columbaria for application by the public under the new model?
- (2) What are the estimated expenditure and staffing on operating and managing Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin for 2026-27? What is the percentage of change as compared with the revised estimate of 2025-26?
- (3) What are the accumulated number of applications for niches received, the number of niches already allocated and the average number of niches allocated each month in respect of Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin from its commissioning in September 2025 to end-February 2026?
- (4) What are the respective numbers of public niches allocated through annual allocation and monthly allocation in each of the past 5 financial years (from 2021-22 to 2025-26)?
- (5) Has the Department earmarked resources to strengthen publicity and promotion through social media, thematic website, collaboration with the funeral trade, etc. to enhance information transparency and convenience, so as to let the public know about the optimised allocation mechanism in 2026-27? If yes, what is the estimated expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

- (1) With the completion of more public columbaria, including Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium in Eastern District commissioned in the third quarter of 2023 and Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin commissioned in the third quarter of 2025, the current supply of public niches is relatively adequate. As a result, the Food and Environmental

Hygiene Department is currently in a position to extend the practice of monthly allocation of niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium to other columbaria, providing greater flexibility in the timing of application submission and allowing earlier completion of the after-death arrangements for the deceased.

Under the new arrangement, the Department will advance the annual allocation to April 2026 and provide a total of 12 150 extendable niches, which comprises 4 000 standard niches and 50 large niches at each of Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium, Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI and Shek Mun Columbarium, to address the accumulated demand for niches at these three public columbaria since the 2025 annual allocation. Following the annual allocation, the Department will implement a new monthly allocation mechanism from 1 August 2026 onwards. Over 1 600 extendable niches, which comprises 100 standard niches and 6 large niches at Cape Collinson-San Ha Columbarium, 100 standard niches and 6 large niches at Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase VI, 420 standard niches and 6 large niches at Shek Mun Columbarium, and 1 000 standard niches and 6 large niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium, will be available for public application each month.

- (2) Shek Mun Columbarium is managed by 3 full-time staff. The revised estimated expenditure of the Department in providing cemeteries and crematoria services, including the services for public columbaria and scattering of ashes in Gardens of Remembrance and at sea, in the 2025-26 financial year was \$594.3 million. The estimated expenditure of the Department for providing the same in the 2026-27 financial year is \$624 million. The Department does not keep a separate breakdown of the expenditure by individual venue.
- (3) To date, the Department received a total of 4 051 eligible applications for niches at Shek Mun Columbarium, all of which were successful. After deducting cases where applicants subsequently chose to give up the allocation, the actual number of allocation was 3 359.
- (4) The current supply of public niches is adequate. Since mid-2020, generally all eligible applicants have been successfully allocated with niches without the need to wait. The actual number of new public niches allocated in each of the past 5 years is as follows:

Year	Actual number of new public niches allocated
2021	19 853
2022	21 121
2023	20 288
2024	18 169
2025	18 735

- (5) In late March, the Department announced the annual allocation of this year and the monthly allocation mechanism to be fully implemented from August 2026 through a press release and a media briefing. The Department will continue to disseminate information on the allocation of public niches to the public through various channels, including media interviews, the Department's website, newspaper advertisements, radio broadcasts, the Department's telephone hotline and interactive voice response system,

posters and publicity leaflets, as well as information seminars on after-death arrangements. Meanwhile, regular meetings will be held with representatives from the funeral trade to disseminate relevant information and encourage trade members to further publicise application details, so that members of the public are well-informed of the application arrangements.

- End -