

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0241)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The leakage rate of water mains in Hong Kong was high at 14.4% in 2022-23, which is way higher than that in Japan and Singapore. Would the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) What were the annual expenditures of the Government on handling water main leaks (including replacement and rehabilitation arrangement) in the past 5 years?
- (b) The Water Supplies Department has set a target in 2018 to reduce the leakage rate of water mains to below 10% by 2030. Can the target be achieved as expected? What major measures will be taken to reduce the leakage rate in the next few years?
- (c) How effective is the Government in launching the Water Intelligent Network (WIN), a smart system for water monitoring? What is the current coverage rate of the WIN and when is it expected to cover the whole territory?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

- (a) Measures taken by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) to handle water main leaks include the establishment of the Water Intelligent Network (WIN), replacement and rehabilitation of water mains, and urgent repair of water mains. The total expenditures on the above works in 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 were about \$440 million, \$770 million, \$1.06 billion, \$1.37 billion and \$1.15 billion respectively.
- (b) & (c) The WSD is now progressively establishing the WIN in the fresh water distribution network over the territory, with a target of about 2 400 District Metering Areas (DMAs). It helps to strengthen management of leakage in water supply network with the strategy of “divide and conquer” and continuous monitoring, and to implement appropriate measures including active leakage detection, pressure management as well as speedy repair of water main leaks, etc. with a view to maintaining the healthiness of the network. As at the end of 2022, about 1 750

DMA's have been established. The remaining DMA's are scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2025.

Besides, we will assess the risk of water main bursts or leaks taking into account various factors including the impacts arising from bursts or leaks, ages and materials of the water mains, records of bursts or leaks, surrounding environment, etc. so as to formulate and implement the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains including replacement or rehabilitation of the water mains at high risk.

All in all, through the implementation of the WIN and the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains, we successfully identified the leakage areas and conducted speedy repair of water main leaks, thereby reducing the number of leak cases. The measures are gradually taking effect. Over the past 5 years, the leakage rate of government fresh water mains has dropped from about 15.2% to 14.4%. We strive to achieve the target of reducing leakage rate to below 10% by 2030 along this direction.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(W)080

(Question Serial No. 0541)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (3) Customer Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. Regarding the Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR), commonly known as Mission Hill Service Reservoir, please provide the number of guided tours completed, the number of participants and the relevant expenditure on operation and maintenance.
2. Will the Administration collaborate with other government departments, non-profit-making organisations, travel agents and other private organisations to link up the Ex-SSPSR with other tourist attractions and facilities in the district, with a view to elevating the experience of the public and visitors?
3. Does the Administration have any concrete work plan and preliminary idea on the long-term revitalisation plan of the Ex-SSPSR?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

1. Since December 2021, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has begun to offer guided tours to Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR) for the public. Self-guided tours were subsequently launched in the fourth quarter of 2022. As at 30 January 2023, over 1 050 guided tours were held (including about 790 guided tours and 260 self-guided tours), with a total of about 25 500 participants. The relevant expenditure on operation and maintenance is about \$450,000 each month.
2. The Development Bureau (DEVB) and the WSD have invited different government departments, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, non-profit-making organisations and professional bodies to visit the Ex-SSPSR, so as to listen to their views and suggestions on the use and future revitalisation arrangement of the Ex-SSPSR, as well as its linkage with other tourist attractions and facilities in the district. The DEVB will work with the WSD to consider and study the feasibility of different proposals.
3. The DEVB is examining the Ex-SSPSR's long-term conservation and revitalisation plan, including by making reference to the views of the participants of the public guided tours.

Plans receiving wider support include preserving the original features and to be opened as a waterworks history museum, providing a public space for free activities, or transforming into a venue and facility for art and cultural events, etc. We will look for a new use most suited for the Ex-SSPSR and consider including it in the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, with a view to enabling the public to better enjoy the place.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 1970)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the leakage of water mains, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. What were the total supply quantities (in cubic metre) of fresh water lost due to water main leaks each year in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by the 18 District Council districts?
2. The estimated leakage rate of water mains in 2023 further dropped by 0.2% from last year to 14.2%, while the Government's target is to reduce to below 10% by 2030. How will the Government evaluate the current progress? Is the Government confident in meeting the target on schedule? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
3. The Government indicated last year that 1 550 District Metering Areas have been established as at the end of 2021. In this regard, what is the target for the Water Intelligent Network (WIN) this year? Can the entire WIN be established in 2024? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
4. Apart from the WIN, has the Government explored ways to further reduce the precious fresh water wasted due to water main leaks and the loss of public money thus incurred? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

The leakage rates of government water mains in 2020, 2021 and 2022 were 14.8%, 14.6% and 14.4% respectively. As leakage rate is calculated based on the overall water supply network, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) does not maintain statistics on the leakage rate of each district.

The WSD is fully committed to establishing the Water Intelligent Network (WIN) in the fresh water distribution network over the territory, with a target of about 2 400 District Metering Areas (DMAs). It helps to strengthen management of leakage in water supply network with the strategy of "divide and conquer" and continuous monitoring, and to implement

appropriate measures including active leakage detection, pressure management as well as speedy repair of water main leaks, etc. with a view to maintaining the healthiness of the network. Owing to the impact of the epidemic in recent years, most works for establishing DMAs which require suspension of fresh water supply were put on hold to ensure the public is supplied with fresh water to maintain environmental hygiene. As at the end of 2022, about 1 750 DMAs have been established. With the easing of the epidemic situation, the establishment of the WIN and the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains will proceed in full swing. The remaining DMAs are expected for completion in the first quarter of 2025.

Besides, we will assess the risk of water main bursts or leaks taking into account various factors including the impacts arising from bursts or leaks, ages and materials of the water mains, records of bursts or leaks, surrounding environment, etc. so as to formulate and implement the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains including replacement or rehabilitation of the water mains at high risk.

All in all, through the implementation of the WIN and the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains, we successfully identified the leakage areas and conducted speedy repair of water main leaks, thereby reducing the number of leak cases. The measures are gradually taking effect. Over the past 5 years, the number of leak cases of government fresh water mains dropped from about 6 800 in 2018 to about 5 700 in 2022. The overall leakage rate reduced from about 15.2% to 14.4%, while the number of burst cases of government fresh water mains decreased from about 50 in 2018 to about 20 in 2022. Moreover, we are further improving our data analytics capability to more effectively identify the leakage areas and conduct speedy repair of water main leaks with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of the WIN. With the continuous development of the WIN and the Risk-based Improvement of Water Mains, we strive to achieve the target of reducing leakage rate of water mains to below 10% by 2030.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2103)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

From the launch of the Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for Subdivided Units in June 2021 to the end of February 2022, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) had received only 14 installation applications for subdivided unit (SDU) tenants.

- (1) How many applications have been received by the WSD so far since March 2022?
- (2) Regarding the stepping up of prosecution and joint inspections with the Rating and Valuation Department against overcharging for water at SDUs, what are the numbers of inspections conducted, warnings issued and prosecution cases?
- (3) Incentive measures for installing separate water meters in SDUs will be enhanced this year. The deposit and the charge for providing a meter will be waived, and the first 12 cubic metres of water consumed for each 4-month period will be free of charge. These seem to offer benefits and protection for SDU tenants to install separate water meters, but still the incentives for landlords are inadequate. What are the expected effectiveness and the estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

- (1) From March 2022 to the end of February 2023, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) had received 65 applications eligible for the Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for Subdivided Units.
- (2) The WSD has conducted joint operations with the Rating and Valuation Department since the end of July 2022. As at the end of February 2023, about 3 400 subdivided units (SDUs) were visited, among which 6 suspected cases involving overcharging of water tariffs were found and are under investigation.

Apart from the above joint operations, the WSD has also visited about 600 SDUs on its own since the Waterworks (Waterworks Regulations) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021

(the Ordinance) came into operation in May 2021. The WSD has prosecuted 7 cases against overcharging SDU tenants for water, all of which were successfully convicted with fines ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

- (3) The Government waives the water fee deposit and the charge for providing a meter for each separate water meter installed under the Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for Subdivided Units. This would reduce the cost of installing water meters for SDU owners and provide financial incentives for them to join the scheme. According to the Ordinance, overcharging SDU tenants for water is subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000. Therefore, joining the scheme and installing separate water meter for each SDU helps preventing SDU owners from breaking the law inadvertently. In addition, the WSD has further enhanced the application procedures of the scheme, including by setting up a dedicated team to expedite processing of applications for installing separate water meters, and simplifying the documentation requirements. The WSD expects the implementation of the measures, coupled with relevant publicity and promotional activities, would encourage more SDU owners to join the scheme.

As the implementation of the above measures is part of the regular duties of the WSD, there are no separate statistics on the expenditure of the above initiatives.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2827)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified

Programme: (3) Customer Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

As stated in the Programme, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) will continue to step up prosecution and joint inspections with the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) against overcharging for water at subdivided units (SDUs). In addition, as announced in the Budget, water fee deposit and charge for providing separate water meter installed in eligible SDUs will be waived. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please provide the number of inspections against overcharging of water tariff, the numbers of complaint cases received and prosecutions instituted, as well as the number of cases successfully prosecuted since the amendments to the Waterworks Regulations came into operation, with a breakdown by year set out in table form.
2. The WSD stated that it would continue to step up prosecution and joint inspections with the RVD. Please provide the details of the operations.
3. As SDU owners or landlords will take the lead to install water meters, how many SDU households are expected to be benefited from the waiver? What measures will the Government take to advise owners or landlords to accept the waiver?
4. What is the estimated saving of expenditure for each SDU household under the waiver?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 58)

Reply:

1. Since the Waterworks (Waterworks Regulations) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 came into effect in May 2021 up to the end of February this year, the relevant information on the numbers of subdivided units (SDUs) visited, complaint cases and prosecution cases instituted by year are as follows:

Year	Number of SDUs visited	Number of complaint cases	Number of prosecution cases instituted
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2021 (after May)	about 200	22	0
2022	about 3 200	47	6
2023 (as at the end of February)	about 600	5	1

The above 7 prosecution cases of overcharging SDU tenants for water were successfully convicted with fines ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000. For the other 67 complaint cases, 7 cases are still under investigation while the remaining cases could not be followed up as the persons involved are unwilling to provide information or testify.

2. The WSD will, according to existing legislation, continue to investigate and prosecute landlords who overcharge water tariff, including to step up proactive inspections to enhance the deterrent effect. Moreover, since the end of July 2022, the WSD has conducted inter-departmental joint operations with the RVD to visit SDUs, in order to step up inspection of overcharging for water and publicise the relevant statutory requirements. The two departments have also set relevant performance indicators with a target to conduct joint visits to about 4 000 SDUs by the end of 2023-24. As at the end of February this year, about 3 400 SDUs were visited.
3. The Government proposes to waive the water fee deposit and the charge for providing a meter for each separate water meter installed under the Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for Subdivided Units. This would reduce the cost of installing water meters for SDU owners and provide financial incentives for them to join the scheme. In addition, the WSD has further enhanced the application procedures of the scheme, including by setting up a dedicated team to expedite processing of applications for installing separate water meters, and simplifying the documentation requirements. The WSD expects the implementation of the measures, coupled with relevant publicity and promotional activities, would encourage more SDU owners to join the scheme.
4. Upon installation of the WSD's separate water meters in SDUs, every such water meter account will have a separate water bill for paying water charge, and the first 12 cubic metres of water consumed for every 4-month period will be free of charge. The actual saving of expenditure for each SDU varies depending on the water consumed. The estimated saving for each 4-month period ranges from about tens of dollars to over \$200.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3481)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

What are the measures taken by the Government to promote water conservation? What are the financial resources and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) is committed to promoting water conservation through various measures. These include implementation of the Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme to encourage the public to use water-saving devices and mandate the use of registered plumbing fixtures and water-consuming devices in new public and private development projects; progressive introduction of smart water meters and automatic meter reading system in new developments to provide customers with the latest water consumption data so as to motivate them to develop water-saving habits; launching of the “Cherish Water Campus” Integrated Education Programme in primary schools and kindergartens with teaching kits and interesting interactive activities to develop the water-saving culture among students; implementation of the “Cherish Water Ambassador Scheme” by recruiting secondary and tertiary school students to be Cherish Water Ambassadors to assist in promoting the message of water conservation in the community; operation of the Water Resources Public Education Centre named “H₂OPE Centre” in Tin Shui Wai to provide the public with information about water resources and water conservation; distribution of flow controllers for water faucets to households joining the “Let’s Save 10L Water” Campaign and using e-Bill service; and installation of flow controllers in some public and private housing estates and schools.

The estimated expenditure of the WSD for promoting water conservation in 2023-24 is about \$14 million. The related manpower includes 5 professionals and 7 supporting staff.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3555)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding Water Save Dave, mascot of the Water Supplies Department, would the Government inform this Committee:

- (1) of the expenditures for the design, publicity and promotion and operation of the mascot;
- (2) of the number of publicity materials produced using the mascot image and the number of promotional activities in the past 5 years; and
- (3) whether it has assessed the public awareness of the mascot; if yes, of the criteria, method, cycle and result of the assessment; if no, of the reasons.

Asked by: Hon LAM Chun-sing (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

(1) & (2) To enhance promotion to the public on cherishing water resources and water conservation, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) introduced its mascot "Water Save Dave" in March 2016. Water Save Dave shares knowledge about water resources and water conservation with the public in a casual way through various publicity channels, including its social media page, public education programmes, publications and publicity materials. Besides, the WSD often arranges for Water Save Dave to attend large-scale community events and environmental activities, such as the "Cherish Water Campus" Integrated Education Programme Award Ceremony and Water Treatment Works Open Day, etc., to publicise the WSD's work and promote the cherishing of water resources and water conservation. The WSD introduces Water Save Dave via different channels and means to disseminate the messages to the public. Therefore, there are no separate statistics on the cost and the number of usage of Water Save Dave.

(3) The WSD did not conduct separate survey on the public awareness of Water Save Dave. The publicity work with Water Save Dave as the mascot has proven effective. At present, the social media page of Water Save Dave has over 36 000 followers.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S020)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department
Subhead (No. & title): Not Specified
Programme: (3) Customer Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

1. It has been 2 years and 4 months since the Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR), a century-old historic building, was discovered and preserved in December 2020. According to the latest reply from the Government, a great majority of guided tour participants supported preserving the original features and to be opened as a waterworks history museum, providing a public space for free activities, or transforming into a venue for art and cultural events. Would the Government inform this Committee which revitalisation and conservation plan does it tend to adopt?

2. The Government stated that it will look for a suitable conservation and revitalisation plan for the Ex-SSPSR and consider including the Ex-SSPSR in the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme. Would the Government inform this Committee on the specific work schedule and whether visits to the Ex-SSPSR will continue to follow the current booking arrangement in the future?

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

The Water Supplies Department has opened the Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Ex-SSPSR) for public visit upon completion of the required temporary strengthening and improvement works to ensure its structural safety. Guided tours and self-guided tours were launched since December 2021 and 31 October 2022 to enable the public to visit and appreciate this historic building, and to learn about the internal and external design and architectural structures of the building, as well as the development history of the fresh water supply system in Kowloon. We are now collecting the public's views after their visits to the Ex-SSPSR and investigating the feasibility of various long-term conservation and revitalisation plans, suitable new use and public visiting arrangement, including the suitability of including the Ex-SSPSR in the 'Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme'. We will update the public in due course after completion of the relevant study.