

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3633)

Head: (39) Drainage Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (1) Stormwater Drainage

Controlling Officer: Director of Drainage Services (MOK Wing-cheong)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In recent years, the Government has initiated the development of the concept of “Rivers in the City”. As part of its efforts to implement the revitalisation works for Tai Wai Nullah, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) once carried out a plan to build Tai Wai River Garden at the nullah in 2022. However, the garden was eventually demolished after completion without opening to the public. Would the Government advise this Committee of the following?

1. Why was Tai Wai River Garden eventually demolished after completion without opening to the public?
2. What is the total expenditure, inclusive of the administration cost, on the construction of the temporary garden?
3. During the construction of the temporary garden, the DSD mentioned that the installation of an alarm system aimed to give off a warning light and make a broadcast while the water level of the channel was rising. How effective is the alarm system? Is the alarm system currently in use at any locations?
4. In September 2023, when Hurricane Signal No. 10 and Black Rainstorm Warning were issued in Hong Kong one after another, the water level of the channel was extremely high. Is Tai Wai Nullah, in the opinion of the DSD, still a suitable site for construction of Tai Wai River Garden as part of the revitalisation works for Tai Wai Nullah? Has the DSD identified any other sites suitable for a river garden? If so, please give the details; if not, please give the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 149)

Reply:

Embracing the “Rivers in the City” concept, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) has been striving to carry out river revitalisation works with the aims of enhancing the ecological value of rivers, promoting a water-friendly culture, improving the community environment, and increasing the connectivity between rivers and their surrounding environment for better integration.

1. To investigate the possibility of allowing the public to enjoy water-friendly activities in the rivers, the DSD provided an installation at Tai Wai Nullah, namely Tai Wai River Garden, in early 2022. The provision of Tai Wai River Garden is a part of the investigation works under the project of Revitalisation of Tai Wai Nullah, the purpose of which is to collect actual operational data and information on the Water Level Forecast System and the Smart River Management System for optimising the design of the entire revitalisation project. Through the temporary facilities installed at Tai Wai River Garden, we wished to let members of the public experiencing the open space at the river, and express their views on revitalisation of Tai Wai Nullah. However, due to the abrupt deterioration of the epidemic at the time, we only managed to collect data on the operation of the two systems mentioned above, while the river garden was unable to be opened to the public as planned.
2. Since the provision of Tai Wai River Garden, including the development of the Water Level Forecast System and the Smart River Management System, was a part of the investigation works of Revitalisation of Tai Wai Nullah, a breakdown of the expenditure involved is not available.
3. During the operation period of Tai Wai River Garden, the DSD collected data on the operation of the Water Level Forecast System and the Smart River Management System. The Water Level Forecast System provided early warnings for the rise of the water level, based on real-time rainfall data and water level of the river. As for the Smart River Management System, it was able to count the number of visitors in the river garden and detect the location of the visitors, as well as provide alerts for visitors entering non-designated open areas to the river management staff for follow-up actions. With reference to the data and conditions of the operation of the systems, we have made enhancement to the systems for their future use in the section of Tai Wai Nullah to be open for public enjoyment. Currently, the systems are not being used at other locations.
4. In view of the torrential rain in September last year, the DSD is currently reviewing and optimising the design of Tai Wai Nullah to ensure that the nullah has sufficient capacity to withstand the extreme weather events in the future. Meanwhile, the DSD is identifying other suitable sites for river revitalisation.

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