

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB140

(Question Serial No. 0998)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Programme: (2) Horticulture and Amenities

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

1. Please provide a breakdown, by post title, salary band and area of work, of the 38 new posts to be created in the area of horticulture and amenities by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) this year; and the following information regarding tree management work in 2018-19, 2019-20 and that estimated for 2020-21:
 - (a) the number of trees managed by the LCSD;
 - (b) the establishment, strength, number of new recruits and wastage of manpower for tree management in the senior, middle and junior levels;
 - (c) the number of service contracts outsourced, the annual expenditure involved and the number of outsourced workers employed by outsourced service providers for tree management work; and
 - (d) the number and type of training courses in tree work organised for staff, as well as the number of course attendees.
2. For districts with “a large number of trees but relatively limited manpower”, will the increase of manpower be reviewed afresh? If so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon POON Siu-ping (LegCo internal reference no.: 42)

Reply:

1. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) plans to create 38 posts under the Programme “Horticulture and Amenities” for (i) the management of new public open spaces in various districts; (ii) the enhancement of existing horticulture and amenities and the strengthening of support services including tree management work; and (iii) the replacement of some non-civil service contract positions which have long-term service needs.

A breakdown of the new posts by salary band and rank is as follows:

Salary band	Rank	No. of posts
Maximum pay point at or below Master Pay Scale (MPS) 33 (i.e. monthly salary at or below \$73,775)	Assistant Leisure Services Manager I, Assistant Leisure Services Manager II, Senior Amenities Assistant, Amenities Assistant I, Amenities Assistant II, Amenities Assistant III, Clerk of Works, Assistant Clerk of Works, Technical Officer/Technical Officer Trainee (Architectural), Artisan, Workman I, Executive Officer I, Executive Officer II, Assistant Clerical Officer, Clerical Assistant, Analyst/Programmer II	35
Maximum pay point above MPS 33	Senior Architect, Landscape Architect/Assistant Landscape Architect, Structural Engineer/Assistant Structural Engineer, Leisure Services Manager	5
	Total:	40 ^{Note}

Note: The creation of 40 posts as set out in the above table will be offset by the deletion of 2 posts having regard to prevailing operational needs. The net increase is therefore 38 posts.

- (a) A breakdown of the number of trees managed by LCSD is as follows:

Year	2018-19	2019-20 (as at February 2020)	2020-21 (projected)
No. of trees	598 000	582 000	582 000

- (b) As at 31 March of each financial year, a breakdown of the staff establishment and strength for tree management work in the senior, middle and junior levels is as follows:

Year	Establishment/Strength		
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (projected)
Senior level ^{Note}	7/7	7/7	7/N.A.
Middle level ^{Note}	110/109	110/109	110/N.A.
Junior level ^{Note}	136/134	136/128	136/N.A.
Total	253/250	253/244	253/N.A.

Note: Senior level refers to maximum pay point above MPS 33.

Middle level refers to maximum pay point at or below MPS 33 and above MPS 10.

Junior level refers to maximum pay point at or below MPS 10.

Since the LCSD staff are subject to regular transfer and posting involving not only tree management work, information on the number of new recruits and wastage of manpower for tree management is not available.

- (c) The number of horticultural service contracts and the annual expenditure involved are as follows:

Year	2018-19	2019-20 (as at December 2019)	2020-21 (projected)
No. of service contract	725 ⁽²⁾	92	117
Annual expenditure ⁽¹⁾ (\$ million)	286.0	182.0	242.7

Notes

- (1) As most of these service contracts involve general horticultural maintenance covering shrub, ground cover, turf and tree, breakdown of expenditure for tree maintenance alone is not available.
- (2) As Super Typhoon Mangkhut caused a huge amount of fallen trees, there was an increase in the number of (short term) tree management contracts entered into by the LCSD in 2018-19 for prompt removal and clearance of dangerous trees.

Since most of these service contracts are “outcome based” contracts without any specification on the fixed number of workers required, the number of outsourced workers employed by outsourced service providers for tree management work is not available.

- (d) The number and type of training courses in tree work organised for staff, as well as the number of course attendees are as follows:

Year	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021 (projected)	
Course Type	No. of courses	Partici- pants	No. of courses	Partici- pants	No. of courses	Partici- pants
In-house training courses ⁽¹⁾	65	570	58 ⁽³⁾	540 ⁽³⁾	70	870
Training by local institutes/tree experts ⁽²⁾	39	1 230	47	1 160	47	1 480
Overseas specialist training programmes	1	4	2	7	2	7
Total	105	1 804	107	1 707	119	2 357

Notes

- (1) In-house courses on horticulture and arboriculture include practical and theory training on tree risk assessment.
- (2) These refer to diploma, certificate programmes and seminars/tree conferences organised by the Development Bureau, local institutes and tree experts.
- (3) In response to the preventive measures for the novel coronavirus pneumonia, some in-house courses originally scheduled for early 2020 had to be postponed. The numbers of in-house courses and participants of these courses are therefore fewer than those of last year.

2. For trees managed by the LCSD, those inside the LCSD's venues are managed and maintained by District Leisure Services Offices through horticultural service contractors; while roadside trees are maintained by 6 Regional Tree Teams (RTTs) of the Department (i.e. Hong Kong East, Hong Kong West, Kowloon, New Territories East (NTE), New Territories West and New Territories North (NTN) regions). The manpower and the number of in-house tree gangs (TGs) for each RTT depend on the number of trees and the complexity of the tree management work in each region. The workload of the tree management teams/gangs has always been a matter of concern to the Department while the manpower has been reviewed from time to time. A comprehensive review on the manpower supply for the 6 RTTs was conducted in mid-2019, the result of which showed that roadside trees maintained by the RTTs in NTE and NTN were more than other RTTs. In view of this, the LCSD plans to employ qualified personnel from the market to set up additional TGs in NTE and NTN starting from the 2020-21 financial year, so as to enhance daily tree management work. Additional Amenities Assistants will be recruited to support the daily work of the TGs. In fact, since 2016, the LCSD has conducted 3 reviews of the manpower arrangements of the RTTs having regard to actual needs for tree management work. An additional 45 staff members and more horticultural/arboricultural services contractors have been hired. Besides, as there are plans to recruit more Amenities Assistants and contractors, we believe that the daily tree maintenance and related work can be coped with.

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