

LCQ12: Hong Kong Tourism Board's Old Town Central campaign

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Si-wing and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, in the Legislative Council today (March 21):

Question:

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) rolled out an "Old Town Central" campaign last year, which repackaged the elements around Central, such as the historical architecture, gourmet meals, arts and culture, fashionable lifestyle and entertainment delights, into tourist walking routes with district characteristics, and promoted such routes to tourists. It has been reported that as the campaign has received positive response from both tourists and members of the tourism industry and has become a highlight for tourism of district characteristics, the HKTB plans to apply the modus operandi of the campaign in the tourism projects for other districts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows (i) the total expenditure incurred by the HKTB last year on the Old Town Central campaign, and (ii) the major channels through which the HKTB promoted such routes to tourists last year; the effectiveness of the campaign, according to HKTB's assessment;

(2) given that from January to mid-February this year, the HKTB added to the Old Town Central campaign new initiatives of "smart travel" which included the installation, on the poles for visitor directional signs along the routes, of some temporary signage boards printed with a QR Code to facilitate tourists in obtaining the relevant information, whether it knows if the HKTB has plans to install such type of signage boards on a long-term basis; if the HKTB does, of the details; if the HKTB does not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it knows if the HKTB has drawn experience from the Old Town Central campaign with a view to introducing smart travel initiatives when it takes forward other district tourism projects; if HKTB has, of the details; if the HKTB has not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

A consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Yiu Si-wing is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) launched a brand-new programme Old Town Central in April 2017 to repackage and promote the diverse tourism appeal of Central. Initiatives include recommending a number of thematic walking routes to introduce heritage buildings and landmarks, arts and culture, lifestyle as well as dining and entertainment offerings in the district, for visitors to explore the Central neighbourhood with elements of history, arts, culture and entertainment according to their interests and at their own pace. The HKTb also worked with local trade partners to launch guided tours and invited local celebrities as well as long-time expatriates to introduce the charms of the district through public relations campaigns and digital platforms to promote in-depth travelling experience to visitors.

To facilitate related promotion work, the HKTb has produced printed "Old Town Central" guidebook/map, which is also available for download on its website and mobile app, to encourage visitors to explore the living culture and local neighbourhoods in depth. As of February 2018, the HKTb has disseminated over 360 000 copies of guidebook/map and the Old Town Central dedicated webpage has recorded a total page view of 890 000. At the same time, the HKTb complemented its promotion in Central by means of lively decorations, such as dressing up the Central-Mid-Levels escalator and walkway in Old Town Central theme, organising a lamppost design competition to showcase Central's historical and cultural appeal in a creative manner and making use of "smart signage" to provide visitors with travel information through scanning of QR code.

The Old Town Central programme was well received by visitors and the travel trade. They considered the programme beneficial in promoting history, heritage and cultural tourism, as well as encouraging visitors to extend their length of stay in Hong Kong to discover different districts from the locals' perspective.

In 2017-18, the HKTb spent about \$6.15 million for organising the Old Town Central programme. As the publicity and promotion work of the programme has been carried out throughout the year and the related expenditure was subsumed into various promotion aspects of the HKTb, it is difficult to break down and quantify the relevant

expenditure items separately.

(2) Starting from the end of 2017, the HKTB has been making use of the lampposts and visitor signage in Central to showcase the winning designs of the lamppost design competition and display "smart signage" to provide visitors with detailed information on local culture and related attractions through scanning of QR code.

Installation on lamppost and visitor signage requires the approval of relevant government departments. The Government has all along been supportive of HKTB's promotion work and has approved HKTB's application for extending the display period of the "smart signage" to May this year. Depending on various factors including visitors' feedback on the "smart signage", the HKTB will continue to co-ordinate with government departments to follow up on the arrangements of the installation concerned.

(3) In view of the positive feedback received from visitors and the travel trade on the Old Town Central project, the HKTB plans to extend this promotion format to other districts of Hong Kong. The HKTB will roll out the Sham Shui Po district promotion in the second quarter of 2018, with a theme of "living museum". The programme will showcase the diverse local culture of Hong Kong people in terms of clothing, dining, living and urban walks. In the long run, the HKTB hopes to extend the programme to six or seven districts in the next few years.

The HKTB will continue to explore adding digital applications and related elements in its future promotion plans.

Ends/Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Issued at HKT 14:30

NNNN