

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1297/16-17
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 24 April 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Tanya CHAN (Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, MH, JP
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung
Dr Hon YIU Chung-yim

Members absent : Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon HO Kai-ming

Public Officers attending : **For item IV**

Ms Christine LOH, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mrs Vicki KWOK
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr WONG Hon-meng
Assistant Director (Waste Reduction & Recycling)
Environmental Protection Department

For item V

Ms Christine LOH, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

Ms Daisy LO
Assistant Director (Water Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Anthony FOK
Principal Environmental Protection Officer
(Sewerage Infrastructure)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr WONG Sui-kan
Assistant Director / Projects and Development
(Acting)
Drainage Services Department

Mr KWOK Ping-keung
Chief Engineer (Consultants Management)
Drainage Services Department

Mr TAI Wai-man
Chief Engineer (Project Management)
Drainage Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel SHEK
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Ms Anki NG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)783/16-17 — Minutes of the meeting held on
27 February 2017)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2017 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(02) — List of outstanding items for
discussion)

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3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 22 May 2017, at 2:30 pm:

- (a) improvement of roadside air quality; and
- (b) tackling marine refuse.

4. The Chairman sought members' views in respect of Mr HUI Chi-fung's letter dated 24 April 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(1)876/16-17(01)) requesting the Panel to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Economic Development to discuss issues relating to the Scheme of Control Agreements ("SCAs") to be entered into between the Government and the two power companies. Members agreed that a relevant item be included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion. Mr HUI also requested the Administration to brief the two Panels before announcing the new SCAs. The Under Secretary for the Environment ("USEN") took note of Mr HUI's request for early discussion of the matter.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration was subsequently requested to provide a written response to the issues raised in Mr HUI's letter, and the response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)890/16-17(01) on 27 April 2017. On 25 April 2017, the Government announced that the new SCAs between the Government and the two power companies had been entered into on that day. At the instruction of the chairmen, a joint meeting of the two Panels concerned was held on 29 April 2017 to receive a briefing from the Administration on the new SCAs.)

IV. Manpower arrangements for implementation of measures on waste reduction and recycling

(LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(03) — Administration's paper on "Manpower arrangements for implementation of measures on waste reduction and recycling"

LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(04) — Background brief on "Waste reduction and recycling" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

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Briefing by the Administration

5. USEN said that the proposed permanent post of Assistant Director of Environmental Protection ("ADEP") in the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") would lead the Waste Reduction and Recycling Division ("WRD"). She advised that details of the proposed manpower arrangements under WRD were provided in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(03)), whereas the job description of the proposed permanent post and the existing/proposed organization chart of EPD were in Annexes I and II of the paper.

Discussion

6. In response to Mr CHAN Hak-kan's concern about the possible conflict of interests of the existing ADEP(WRD) attending the current meeting to discuss issues relating to the proposed permanent post, USEN said that as the existing ADEP(WRD) was performing the relevant job duties, he could help facilitate the discussion by providing responses to members' enquiries relating to the proposed post and the manpower arrangements of WRD.

Measures to support recycling work

Recovery and recycling of different recyclables

7. Mr Tommy CHEUNG disclosed that one of his companies took part in the open tender conducted by the Government for selecting glass management contractors under the producer responsibility scheme ("PRS") on glass beverage containers. He opined that the recycling of such containers would be conducted more efficiently if the Administration could offer incentives to the general public, for example, by operating a "deposit-and-return system" for consumers to deposit glass containers at refuse collection points ("RCPs") managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD"), in return for financial or other incentives. Mr CHEUNG also enquired whether the proposed permanent post would coordinate the preparatory work for drafting the legislation for regulating the recycling of waste cooking oils ("WCO") and preventing such oils from re-entering the food chain.

8. USEN responded that the Administration considered that the recycling of WCO would need to be regulated by legislation in the long run. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) ("DDEP(2)") advised that EPD had introduced an administrative scheme known as "Waste Cooking Oils Recycling Administrative Registration Scheme" in February 2016 to register eligible local collectors/processors/exporters of WCO. FEHD had imposed an additional licensing condition by phases since July 2016 on food premises requiring any

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WCO produced during the cooking process on the licensed premises must be handed over to a collector/disposer/exporter registered by EPD for disposal. The new licensing condition would take effect from November 2017. In addition, the proposed permanent post would be responsible for coordinating preparatory work for the drafting of legislative amendments to the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) to introduce a licensing system on the collection, disposal, import and export of WCO, with a view to strengthening the regulation of WCO recycling. The Administration would take into consideration relevant overseas experiences and statistics gathered from the said administrative scheme, and continue to step up efforts in the regulation of WCO.

9. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for the proposed manpower arrangements. He suggested the Administration consider providing financial incentives to the public for their participation in recycling. The Administration should also explore ways to enhance the production and use of recycled products, and promote and expand the outlets for such products. USEN took note of the suggestions.

10. Mr Kenneth LEUNG enquired about the measures to enhance support for recycling of plastic bottles and ensure that there would be sufficient outlets for such recyclables. Mr LEUNG also expressed concern about marine littering of plastic bottles and bags which might adversely affect the marine habitats. Referring to the use of soy powder in some countries for making biodegradable and edible plastic bags, he urged the Administration to consider mandating the use of biodegradable materials for manufacturing plastic bags.

11. USEN advised that part of the job responsibilities of the proposed permanent post was to enhance the promotion of clean recycling. EPD had collaborated with the Environmental Campaign Committee to launch a Clean Recycling Campaign to drive home the significance of keeping recyclables, including pack bottles, clean which had an important bearing on their recyclability and value. ADEP(WRD) said that the Administration would collect up-to-date market information and technology developments in the recycling industry. As the current policy intent was to discourage the use of plastic bags, the Administration did not consider it appropriate to legislate on the materials used for manufacturing plastic bags at this stage.

12. Dr Elizabeth QUAT indicated that she had no objection to the proposed manpower arrangements but expressed concern about the effectiveness of the waste reduction and recycling work undertaken by WRD. In particular, she noted that the amount of waste plastics recovered and recycled had dropped significantly from 2013 to 2015 while the amount of waste plastics disposed of at landfills during the same period had increased.

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13. Mr WU Chi-wai opined that the mere implementation of a PRS on plastics or other recyclables, or provision of more manpower resources would not be effective in enhancing the recycling rates of waste plastics and other recyclables. He enquired about the measures to be taken by the proposed permanent post to effectively support and promote waste plastics recycling. For instance, he suggested the provision of facilities/devices in public places or housing estates for the public to compress waste plastics before recycling. Mr WU urged the Administration to step up efforts in this regard or he might not support the proposed manpower arrangements.

14. USEN responded that the Administration would continue to take various initiatives to promote recycling but the results could not be reaped within a short period of time. One such initiative was municipal solid waste ("MSW") charging which was expected to drive the community to practise waste reduction and recycling at source. Subject to the passage of the enabling legislation to be introduced later this year, MSW charging would be implemented in the second half of 2019 at the earliest. In addition, the Administration would continue to promote clean recycling with a view to increasing the value of recyclables. It would also commission a study to examine the feasibility of introducing a PRS on suitable waste plastic containers.

Recycling Fund

15. Dr Elizabeth QUAT relayed the views of the recycling trade that the rate of successful applications of the Recycling Fund was low. She enquired about how the proposed permanent post would plan to assist the recycling industry to apply for the funding. USEN advised that EPD had been in close contact with the recycling trade and responding to their needs, and the application procedures had been streamlined.

16. DDEP(2) added that ADEP(WRD) and his colleagues in WRD had been keeping the operation of the Recycling Fund under close review. Among other measures, the administrative workload of small and medium enterprises ("SMEs") in making applications for the fund had been minimized, for example, through a new category of projects created under the Enterprise Support Programme where SMEs undertaking the projects might submit applications, report achievements and seek reimbursements in accordance with a set of streamlined rules and procedures. Other measures included facilitating recyclers to procure equipment for upgrading their operational efficiency or minimizing nuisances arising from their operations to the neighbourhood, and providing partial reimbursement of expenses midway through the project periods. All along, EPD, the Recycling Fund Advisory Committee and the Hong Kong Productivity Council as the Secretariat had been actively assisting recyclers who had indicated interest in applying for the fund.

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EcoPark

17. Mr Kenneth LAU expressed support for the proposed permanent post and the provision of long-term resources for promoting waste reduction and recycling. Mr LAU urged that the proposed post should steer WRD to step up educational activities on waste reduction in view that, for instance, as much as over 70 000 tonnes of usable electronic products were disposed of at landfills every year. Noting from paragraph 11 of LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(03) that the leases of two lots in the EcoPark had ended and the lots concerned would be put to tender once they had been reinstated, Mr LAU enquired about the nature of the recycling operations carried out by the two ex-tenants, the reasons for termination of their leases, details of the reinstatement work and tendering arrangements, and the terms of the new leases.

18. ADEP(WRD) advised that one tenant was a commercial organization conducting waste batteries recycling, and the other was a non-governmental organization ("NGO") carrying out waste plastics recycling with the support of the Environment and Conservation Fund. The term of the lease for the waste batteries recycler was 10 years but the recycler could not commission the project in accordance with the lease agreement, and legal proceedings had been initiated to terminate the agreement. As regards the NGO in question, it had operated the plastics resources recycling centre at the EcoPark for about seven years and had decided to cease operation after taking into account the latest market development. Both lots concerned would be put to tender at suitable times once reinstatement works had been completed. Two other lots in the EcoPark were under tendering at present and the proposed recycling operations, among other factors, would be considered for selecting the successful bids.

19. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that he had no objection to the proposed manpower arrangements. He opined that the Government should hold the manufacturers more responsible for recycling of their products after use by the consumers. USEN responded that taking waste glass beverage containers as an example, due to their heavy weight, high transportation costs and limited local outlets, consideration had been given to implementing a PRS for such containers which best suited the local circumstances. Under this PRS, exemption from the recycling fee concerned would be granted to registered suppliers with glass container waste reduction plans.

20. ADEP(WRD) added that the Government was planning to commission a study to examine the feasibility for introducing a PRS on suitable waste plastic containers, mainly those carrying beverages or personal care products. In the long run and subject to the result of the feasibility study, the Government might consider introducing relevant legislative proposal to implement the PRS.

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Meanwhile, WRD would continue to conduct educational activities to promote waste separation at source and clean recycling to increase the value of recyclables including waste plastics.

Objectives and performance indicators

21. Noting that after the establishment of WRD in 2014, the MSW recovery rate had decreased by 2% in 2015, Mr CHAN Hak-kan enquired about the reasons for such decrease and the methods for assessing the performance of ADEP(WRD) in promoting waste reduction and recycling. Mr HUI Chi-fung enquired about the performance indicators for evaluating the work of WRD.

22. DDEP(2) responded that as outlined in the "Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" published in May 2013, the Government had adopted a clear strategy to achieve the target of reducing per capita waste disposal by 40% by 2022 through multi-pronged actions including implementation of the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign and MSW charging, and commissioning of the Organic Waste Treatment Facilities Phases I and II.

23. USEN advised that the ongoing efforts of waste reduction and recycling required long-term professional inputs, management and steer at the directorate level, and the results of such efforts could not be assessed or concluded prematurely within a short period of time, nor could the objectives/effects of such initiatives be quantified in some cases. She assured members that the Administration would report the results of related initiatives to the Panel when appropriate. She also invited interested members to approach EPD for more detailed explanation on the work of WRD.

Concluding remarks

24. The Chairman concluded that members in general raised no objection to the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration.

V. Construction of dry weather flow interceptors to improve water quality and reduce odour in Victoria Harbour and sewer rehabilitation in Kowloon, Shatin and Sai Kung

(LC Paper No. CB(1)824/16-17(05) — Administration's paper on "Construction of dry weather flow interceptors to improve water quality and reduce odour in Victoria Harbour and sewer

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rehabilitation in Kowloon, Shatin and Sai Kung")

Briefing by the Administration

25. With the aid of a power-point presentation, the Assistant Director/Projects and Development (Acting), Drainage Services Department ("AD(P&D)/DSD") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to upgrade the works projects 4380DS, part of 4389DS and 4393DS to Category A for (a) construction of an underground dry weather flow interceptor ("DWFI") with automatic penstocks at the outlet of the Cherry Street box culvert ("CSBC") to intercept the discharge of polluted urban runoff into New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter ("NYMTTS") and coastal area of West Kowloon, (b) phase 1 upgrading of West Kowloon and Tsuen Wan sewerage by constructing four DWFIs in Tsuen Wan and four DWFIs in West Kowloon, modifying 43 existing DWFIs in West Kowloon with ancillary works to intercept the polluted stormwater and convey it to Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works for proper treatment and disposal, and (c) rehabilitating trunk sewers in Kowloon, Shatin and Sai Kung with ancillary works to reduce the risk of sewage overflow from these sewers.

(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation materials was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)873/16-17(01) on 24 April 2017.)

Discussion

Long-term plan to improve water quality in coastal areas

26. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that the installation of DWFIs would help improve water quality and reduce odour in Victoria Harbour, but she expressed concern about the misconnection of foul water pipes of some private buildings to the stormwater drainage system ("foul water pipes misconnection") in old districts such as Hung Hom and Tai Kok Tsui, which were the causes for the emission of strong stench from the seawater in the vicinity. In addition, strong stench also emitted from waters at the promenade alongside New Territories West from Kwai Tsing to Tsuen Wan. Dr LEUNG urged the Administration to implement a set of comprehensive odour control/mitigation measures and apply for the necessary funding in support of a long-term plan of five to 10 years to resolve the problems at source and to promote water-friendly culture and activities. She stressed that substantial financial and technological inputs were required for implementing a comprehensive plan to resolve the strong stench problem at the harbourfront. She enquired about the possibility

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of conducting cross-bureau projects to be led by the Environment Bureau for improvement of the harbourfront pollution and odour problem.

27. USEN pointed out that on completion of the three projects for implementation of DWFIs and rehabilitation of trunk sewers, water quality in the subject areas would be improved and odour reduced. Separately, the Administration had commissioned a consultancy study about a year ago on how to reduce near shore pollution and enhance the quality of coastal waters of the Victoria Harbour. Based on the findings of the study, EPD would develop detailed plans to combat the problems with relevant bureaux/departments in the long run.

28. The Assistant Director (Water Policy), Environmental Protection Department ("AD(WP)/EPD") supplemented that the consultancy study in question was expected to conclude by end 2017 and the Administration would report the progress to the Panel in 2018. As the causes for stench for different districts would be identified in the study, targeted pollution control measures and engineering solutions would be developed to address the problems.

Water resources management

29. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the measures for reuse of rainwater and production of reclaimed water from sewage. Making reference to Singapore, he considered that rainwater harvesting system ("RHS") and underground storage system could be used to collect and reuse rainwater.

30. USEN responded that the Drainage Services Department ("DSD") and the Water Supplies Department ("WSD") had incorporated concepts of sustainable water resources management into their respective facilities. The Administration would continue to consider new water supply measures as set out in "Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+" ("the Climate Action Plan"), which aimed to increase water sources from three to six through the addition of seawater desalination, water reclamation and grey water reuse and rainwater harvesting. Regarding RHS, the Happy Valley Underground Stormwater Storage Scheme had started to operate and the Administration would explain in more detail on sustainable water resources when briefing the Panel on the Climate Action Plan later this year. AD(WP)/EPD supplemented that WSD was reviewing its "Total Water Management" strategy for ensuring sustainable use of water resources. AD(P&D)/DSD explained that the Happy Valley Underground Stormwater Storage Scheme was used to reduce the flow entering underground drains. Collected underground water had also been used for irrigation. The Administration would continue to incorporate related design in more public works projects in future where practicable and appropriate.

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Concluding remarks

31. The Chairman concluded that members were supportive of the proposal and raised no objection to the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration.

VI. Any other business

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:03 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 July 2017