

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1520/01-02
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PL/EA/1

LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

**Minutes of meeting held on
Wednesday, 20 March 2002, at 9:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon CHOY So-yuk (Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon LAU Ping-cheung
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Members absent : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Public officers attending : **For item IV**
Environment and Food Bureau

Mr Donald TONG
Deputy Secretary (B)

Mr Raistlin LAU
Principal Assistant Secretary (B)1

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Benny WONG
Assistant Director (Waste and Water)

Drainage Services Department

Mr C H LAM
Assistant Director (Sewage Services)

Mr T H TAI
Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (Special Duties)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Becky YU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)2

I Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1270/01-02 — Minutes of the joint meeting with the Transport Panel and Planning, Lands and Works Panel held on 15 January 2002

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1325/01-02 — Minutes of the joint meeting with the Transport Panel held on 24 January 2002)

The minutes of the joint meetings held on 15 and 24 January 2002 were confirmed.

II Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted the following information papers which had been issued since last meeting-

- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1170/01-02 — Chinese version of the Administration's response to the allegation made against the tendering procedure of particulate reduction devices by Mr Jake van der KAMP in his articles published in the South China Morning Post on 18, 23 and 31 January 2002
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1174/01-02 — Chinese version of the Administration's response to Hon Audrey EU's letter regarding an allegation made against the tendering procedure of particulate reduction devices
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1227/01-02 — Administration's reply to the further questions raised by members on the allegation made against the tendering procedure of particulate reduction devices
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1242/01-02 — Submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance on the light buses using cleaner fuel together with the Administration's response
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1299/01-02 — Administration's reply to concerns raised at the Panel meeting on 28 January 2002 regarding the environmental acceptability of in-situ treatment of contaminated materials at Kai Tak Nullah

III Date of next meeting and items for discussion

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1326/01-02(01) — List of follow-up actions arising from discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1326/01-02(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the subject of "Injection of funding into Environment and Conservation Fund" at the next meeting on Monday, 22 April 2002, at 2:30 pm. For the remaining agenda item, members agreed that it should be decided by the

Chairman after consultation with the Administration.

(Post-meeting note: The subject of “The new dredged/excavated sediment disposal management framework” was subsequently included in the agenda for the next meeting.)

IV Progress report on trial and studies on Harbour Area Treatment Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1154/01-02 — Information paper provided by the Administration)

4. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food (B) (DSEF(B)) briefed members on the progress of the trials and studies to ascertain the feasibility of options proposed by the International Review Panel (IRP) to implement the further stages of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) by highlighting the salient points in the information paper.

Programme for trials and studies

5. Referring to the programme for the trials and studies in relation to the HATS studies at Annex B to the paper, Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the extent and the duration of studies to be conducted before the coming into operation of HATS. DSEF(B) said that HATS was originally scheduled for completion around 2010. However, in the light of public concerns over the Government’s original plan for the subsequent stages of HATS, the Administration appointed an IRP to carry out a review in 2000. IRP had subsequently proposed four alternative treatment and disposal options, all involving the use of Biological Aerated Filters (BAF) technology for treatment. Although BAF was a proven technology overseas, its feasibility and effectiveness in treating local saline sewage had yet to be tested. The IRP recommended and the Government agreed that trials and studies be carried out before a final configuration for the subsequent stages of HATS was selected. Based on the results of these trials and studies, the Government would be able to verify the environmental, engineering and financial viability of respective options and to assess the reliability and operational risk, land requirements, as well as the capital and recurrent costs of the selected technology. In order to expedite the delivery of the project and to identify the most appropriate means for operating the project, a study on procurement options would be conducted to review possible contractual arrangements, including “Design, Build, Operate”. The Administration would endeavour to complete all the studies as soon as practicable with a view to providing further improvements to the water quality of the harbour area, which was seen to have improved since the commissioning of Stage I of HATS. The outcome of the trials and studies would be published for public consultation before a decision was made on the choice of option.

6. Ms LAU further enquired about the feasibility studies for selected option under item 10 of the programme, the Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste and Water) (ADEP(WW)) explained that these studies would include detailed investigation works which should only be carried out after a choice had been made on the treatment option. Depending on the results of the trials and studies, the further stages of HATS were expected to be completed in around 2015 following standard procedures of implementing works projects. However, he assured members that efforts, such as conducting trials and studies in parallel where practicable, would be made to expedite the programme. Ms LAU expressed disappointment at the extensive delay in the completion of HATS and requested the Administration to provide the timetable for implementing further stages of HATS and to explore means to expedite the works.

Environmental and Engineering Feasibility Studies (EEFS)

7. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that he was confused with the many trials and studies to be conducted, particularly those on centralized and distributed treatment options as IRP had already ruled out the centralized option. Given that IRP had also identified BAF technology as the way forward for HATS, he questioned the need for conducting a 24-month EEFS on different treatment options. DSEF(B) explained that the objective of EEFS was to evaluate the potential impacts of options of the further stages of HATS on the receiving water environment and their effectiveness in achieving the Water Quality Objectives and meeting other relevant agreed criteria. He added that as the four options proposed by IRP involved combination of varying degrees of centralized and distributed treatment, it was necessary to include studies on both types of treatment in EEFS. A preliminary analysis of the efficiency of the treatment technologies should be available by the end of 2002 or early 2003 and members would be apprised of the outcome of the trials. In view of the importance of HATS, Mr SIN Chung-kai agreed that it was worthwhile to invest time and resources in selecting the best option of treatment.

8. While appreciating the Administration's efforts in analyzing alternative options instead of focusing on centralized treatment at the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works (SCISTW), Ms Cyd HO considered that the Administration should consult green groups on the various options in parallel with the trials and studies on the feasibility of these options. DSEF(B) said that the Administration noted the need for consultation on the way forward for HATS. As such, the Monitoring Group set up to monitor the progress of the trials and studies had included four members of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE), two of whom were from green groups. The Administration had also consulted ACE on the trials and studies.

Compact Sewage Treatment Technology Pilot Plant Trials (CSTTT)

9. DSEF(B) said that pursuant to members' suggestion, the Administration had decided to consider testing in the trials other well-proven compact sewage treatment technology in addition to the BAF technology. As such, three CSTTT, including two

BAF technologies and one non-BAF technology would be concurrently carried out at SCISTW.

10. Ir Dr Raymond HO considered it useful to visit SCISTW to observe the three CSTTT. He however expressed concern about the cost implications of extending the trial period of CSTTT from three to 10 months with a possibility for further extension to a maximum period of 13 months. DSEF(B) explained that the decision to extend the trial period of CSTTT to 10 months from three months as originally proposed was a recommendation from the Monitoring Group and aimed at covering both hot and cold seasons so as to provide more comprehensive trial results. As regards costs, DSEF(B) advised that the estimates for the three, 10 and 13-month trials were \$16.2 million, \$22.7 million and \$24.2 million respectively. It was expected that the additional cost of \$1.5 million incurred from extending the trial period from 10 to 13 months could be offset by savings in EEFS.

Study on procurement options

11. Ir Dr HO asked whether the second part of the Study on Procurement Options involving the preparation of core contract documents could be advanced. DSEF(B) advised that as the procurement framework would be contingent upon the choice of option, this part of the study could only be carried out after a consensus had been reached on the way forward. The preparation of contract documents would proceed in parallel with the detailed study on the selected option and hence would not unduly lengthen the completion period of the trials and studies.

Interim measures

12. Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that interim measures should be in place to clean the harbour area pending the completion of HATS. By way of illustration, efforts should be made to treat the effluent from Kai Tak Nullah (KTN), which was heavily polluted as a result of illegal sewage connections, before it was discharged to the sea. Her views were shared by Mr SIN Chung-kai. In response, DSEF(B) explained that KTN was a stormwater drainage and did not form part of the sewage network of HATS. Notwithstanding, the Administration would take actions to abate the pollution problems arising from KTN. ADEP(WW) added that apart from improving the local sewage network, the Administration had stepped up enforcement against illegal sewage connections.

13. Ms Cyd HO opined that the Administration should make use of the trial on BAF at SCISTW to treat part of the sewage load in the interim, without having to await the completion of trials and studies. DSEF(B) advised that since the commissioning of SCISTW in 1997, it had been providing Chemically Enhanced Primary Treatment for sewage collected from Kowloon West which accounted for 20% of the total sewage load entering into the harbour. Since the completion of the six sewage collection tunnels in December 2001, SCISTW had been treating 70% of the sewage from main urban area, removing 600 tonnes of pollutants that used to enter the harbour each day.

If the trials turned out to be successful, consideration would be given to allowing the pilot plants to continue to operate. The land use for the remaining space at SCISTW had yet to be determined subject to the choice of the option to be adopted. ADEP(WW) concurred that there would be opportunity for works on SCISTW to start early because the land was already available, but this could only start after the HATS option had been selected and agreed to.

Water quality

14. Ms HO stressed that apart from cost considerations, the impact on water quality and ecology of the receiving waters should also be taken into account in considering the choice of options. She considered it necessary for the Administration to apprise the public about the price that had to be paid in taking forward the options. DSEF(B) said that under EEFS, there would be consultation with members of the Environmental Affairs Panel, green groups as well as academics on the water quality criteria to be used for assessing the environmental impact of different options on the receiving water bodies, including beaches and other sensitive receivers such as fish nursery and spawning areas, maricultural sites, corals etc.

15. The Chairman enquired about the improvement in water quality brought about by the Stage I system at SCISTW. ADEP(WW) advised that since the full commissioning of the system had only started in February 2002, a statistical analysis on water quality changes was not yet available. It would also be prudent to include wet weather data as water quality in Hong Kong was heavily influenced by the Pearl River. Members would be informed of the outcome after summer. Nevertheless, there had been noticeable improvements in the water quality at the eastern part of the harbour with a 90% reduction in bacteria level and 15% increase in dissolved oxygen at Lei Yue Mun. The western part of the harbour however remained polluted by direct discharge of untreated sewage from the north shore of Hong Kong Island.

Admin 16. In concluding, members requested and the Administration undertook to keep the Panel informed of the progress of the trials and studies.

V Any other business

17. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:55 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat
19 April 2002