

**LegCo Members' meeting with
Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) members
on 12 December 2002**

Problems of vehicle repair workshops in Kowloon City District

- (a) Concerns/suggestion raised by KCDC members at the meeting–
- (i) KCDC members expressed concern about the environmental problems created by vehicle repair workshops (VRWs) in Kowloon City. They pointed out that the VRWs in Kowloon City had outnumbered those in other districts, causing serious environmental problems in Kowloon City.
 - (ii) KCDC members considered that the enforcement actions taken by the relevant government departments had not been effective in regulating VRWs which had remained a nuisance to the residents in the district. Some KCDC members suggested that to solve the problem, Government should provide modern multi-storey buildings with environmental protection and other necessary facilities in appropriate locations for VRWs so that they could continue to operate in an ideal setting.
 - (iii) As a long-term solution to the problem, KCDC members suggested that a site for VRWs should ultimately be provided in each district for the convenience of their customers and to facilitate their business.
 - (iv) KCDC members considered that VRWs should be relocated to special sites away from the residential areas. However, they pointed out that in a previous case, Government had tried to relocate VRWs to an industrial site but had failed due to high rent and traffic problems. In order to relocate VRWs successfully, KCDC members considered that the Government should plan systematically and provide suitable sites with the necessary supporting facilities for VRWs.
 - (v) KCDC members considered that Government should provide assistance in minimising environmental pollution and nuisance to the residents caused by VRWs and promote self-discipline among VRWs. Some KCDC members considered that if VRWs were able to comply with the requirements of the relevant ordinances, they should be allowed to continue to operate in the busy areas. Some KCDC members also suggested that Government should

continue its cooperation with the universities in conducting research on the development of devices to reduce pollution caused by VRWs.

(b) Views expressed and information provided by LegCo Members at the meeting–

- (i) LegCo Members pointed out that while it was necessary to regulate VRWs to reduce pollution and nuisance caused to the residents, a balance should be struck so that the operation of VRWs and the livelihood of their staff would not be affected, especially during the current economic downturn.
- (ii) LegCo Members pointed out that the operation of VRWs might be seriously affected if they were relocated to remote areas or required to invest huge amount of money in improving its operation to reduce pollution. Some Members recommended the establishment of an environmental protection fund to provide loans for VRWs to install the necessary improvement facilities.
- (iii) LegCo Members advised that VRWs were subject to control under various environmental ordinances. VRWs were also required to comply with the requirements in other ordinances related to safety. The Administration had undertaken enforcement actions against the air, noise and waste problems arising from the operations of VRWs in Kowloon City. To complement enforcement actions, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had launched a partnership programme to promote good environmental practices to the vehicle repair trade. EPD had also commissioned the Hong Kong Productivity Council to design an activated carbon absorption system to control emission of volatile organic solvents arising from paint spraying and had been actively promoting the system to VRWs.

(c) Issues referred for comments by the Administration–

The Administration is invited to comment on the policy regarding the land use and planning for the relocation of VRWs to industrial sites. As regards the problems of VRWs in Kowloon City, the issues will be taken up separately with the Administration by the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat.