

立法會
Legislative Council

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seen by the Administration)

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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 10th meeting
held in the Conference Room A of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 1 June 2005, at 8:30 am**

Members present:

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, S.B.St.J., JP (Chairman)
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man

Members absent:

Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Public officers attending:

Miss Amy TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works)
Mrs Rita LAU, JP	Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)
Mr K K KWOK, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment)
Mr Davey CHUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mr F K LAI	Director of Drainage Services
Dr M J BROOM	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Water Policy)
Mr P K CHAN	Chief Engineer/Sewerage Projects Drainage Services Department
Mr William C G KO, JP	Director of Water Supplies
Mr LEUNG Mang-chiu, JP	Assistant Director of Water Supplies /New Works
Mr Vincent LIU	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food and Environmental Hygiene) ²
Mr C H YUE, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr Donald TONG	Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Administration and Development)
Ms Rhonda LO	Assistant Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Operations) ³
Miss Susie HO, JP	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Health) ¹
Mr Paul CHENG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Health) ² (Acting)
Dr M Y CHENG	Deputy Director (Professional Services and Facilities Management) Hospital Authority
Dr Donald LI	Executive Manager (Hospital Planning) Hospital Authority

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Alice AU	Senior Council Secretary (1) ⁵
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Staff in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Anthony CHU	Council Secretary (1)2
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

HEAD 704 – DRAINAGE

PWSC(2005-06)14 229DS North District and Tolo Harbour sewerage, sewage treatment and disposal – high priority works – expansion of Shek Wu Hui sewage treatment works and Ting Kok Road pumping station No. 5

The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) was consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 24 March 2005.

2. Miss CHOY So-yuk, Chairman of the EA Panel, reported that the Panel had discussed the composite paper on five sewage collection and treatment schemes, including project 229DS. While the Panel supported the captioned project in principle, members were concerned about the inconvenience caused to the public brought about by road opening works associated with the sewage treatment works. In this regard, members had requested the Administration to shorten the duration of works and consider overnight works where possible so as to minimize traffic disruptions as a result of road closure. Some members had also requested the Administration to make use of the opportunity to install smaller utility pipelines above or alongside the sewers, thereby providing a common utility duct system to facilitate future repair works. The Administration had addressed the concerns raised by members.

3. Referring to paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper, Mr LI Kwok-ying enquired whether the estimated recurrent expenditure of \$5.3 million arising from the proposed works would result in an increase in the sewage charges on the public. In response, the Director of Drainage Services said that the proposed works would lead to an increase in the recurrent cost of providing sewage services by about 0.32%, which would be considered by the Administration when reviewing future sewage charges.

4. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 709 – WATERWORKS

PWSC(2005-06)15 174WC Replacement and rehabilitation of water mains, stage 1 phase 2

5. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(2005-06)16 244WF Water supply to Sha Tin development Area 56A

6. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 703 – BUILDINGS

PWSC(2005-06)17 8NT Conversion of aqua privies into flushing toilet - phase 2B

7. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had consulted all relevant District Councils on Phase 2B of the project in March and April 2004 and in January, February and April 2005.

8. While appreciating the proposal would bring improvement to the standard of public toilet facilities, Mr LAU Kong-wah was concerned whether the problems of foul smell and inadequate provision of female cubicles in public toilets would be adequately addressed in view of the fast growing number of visitors in particular tourists from the Mainland. He pointed out that the situation was particularly serious in popular tourist spots during weekends and holidays. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food and Environmental Hygiene)² (PAS(F&EH)²,HWFB) said that there were 533 aqua privies (APs) maintained by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. The Administration had sought funding approval for converting 100 APs into flushing toilets in phases starting from 2004. Cleansing service for public toilets had been stepped up to twice daily on average, and air refresher had been provided in over half of the public toilets in popular tourist spots and locations with heavy usage. As regards additional toilet facilities for female, a new ratio of three female cubicles to two male cubicles would be adopted to replace the existing ratio of two female cubicles to three male cubicles for the 30 APs under the project.

9. Mr LAU Kong-wah urged the Administration to expedite the conversion projects for the 100 APs especially those in popular tourist spots and enquired about the timetable for converting the remaining APs into flushing toilets. For further improvement, he considered it necessary for the Administration to put in place temporary measures such as portable toilets in popular tourists spots, and to ensure that supporting cleansing services for maintaining a good hygiene standard would be provided after completion of the conversion works.

10. PAS(F&EH)2,HWFB replied that of the 100 APs selected for the conversion works, 67 were located at popular tourist spots and 33 were of relatively high usage rate. The conversion works in Phase 1 was scheduled for completion in 2006 while the works in Phase 2A and 2B were scheduled for completion in 2007. The Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Administration and Development) (DD(A&D),FEHD) supplemented that the Administration would continue to implement upgrading works for the remaining APs as and when appropriate. However, the type of works to be implemented would be subject to site constraints. As many APs were at remote areas where nearby public sewer was not available for connecting the underground drains to the public sewer, the Administration would have to consider either installing bio-treatment system or converting the existing septic tank into an underground holding tank for those APs that would be converted into flushing toilets. The Administration would consult District Councils and the tourist industry in planning the next phase of improvement works for those APs which had an hourly usage rate of less than 20 visits. In the meantime, the Administration would consider improvement measures such as increases in the provision of air refresher and cleansing service for APs in popular tourist spots.

11. Mrs Selina CHOW considered the conversion timetable works for the 100 AP too slow. She queried the use of an hourly usage rate of 20 visits as the criteria to determine if an AP should be converted to flushing toilet. For popular tourist spots in remote areas, the usage of APs could be very high on Sundays and public holidays but the hourly average rate could still fall below 20 visits. As the hygiene condition of public toilets had a significant impact on the image of a city, the Administration should also expedite the upgrading works for the remaining APs located in popular tourist spots not covered in the conversion programme. Moreover, an automatic flushing system at frequent intervals should be considered by the Administration as a more effective measure to tackle the foul smell problem in order to maintain a good hygiene standard of public toilets.

12. DD(A&D),FEHD clarified that APs would be selected for conversion works either if they were located in popular tourist spots or with usage of at least 20 visits over a one-hour period. The Administration would follow up with the tourist industry for suggestions on improvement works for other APs located in tourist spots but not included in the conversion programme. As regards the proposed automatic flushing system, the Administration had implemented a pilot scheme, but found that frequent repairs were needed. This posed a more serious problem to the management of toilets, and as such, the Administration considered that full-scale implementation of auto-flushing would be undesirable. PAS(F&EH)2,HWFB supplemented that in addition to the 533 APs in rural areas managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, there were over 300 public toilets in the urban areas. The public toilets in the urban areas could be equipped with better facilities and provided with toilet attendants. At present, over 70% of the urban public toilets with heavy usage were provided with toilet attendants. Not all APs in rural areas could be converted into flushing toilets as desludging vehicles/barges were unable to gain access to some APs by land or by sea due to geographical constraints. Notwithstanding that, the Administration

would consider appropriate improvements works for the remaining APs in rural areas.

13. Mrs Selina CHOW said that users in general found the hygiene condition of public toilets unsatisfactory in spite of the measures implemented by the Administration. While the deployment of cleansing staff in public toilets would provide more effective cleansing services and achieve a higher standard of hygiene, the Administration should be mindful of the recurrent cost so incurred.

14. Ms Miriam LAU held the view that it would be more cost effective to focus on the better management of public toilets through inspection of APs by staff on a daily basis and the stepping up of cleansing service where necessary. DD(A&D),FEHD responded that some temporary toilet attendant posts were created up to the end of March 2006 to provide additional cleansing service as part of the Government's job creation exercise, and staff members were stationed in popular tourist spots such as the Peak and the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. He said that the presence of toilet attendants was effective in maintaining the state of cleanliness in public toilets located in popular tourist spots and those with heavy patronage. The Administration would carefully review whether temporary toilet attendants should continue to be provided in public toilets which were not heavily patronised.

15. Referring to the bio-treatment system which enabled re-circulation of used water for flushing purpose, Miss CHOY So-yuk questioned why the Administration had only introduced the environment-friendly system for five Type 2 APs and not the 22 Type 1 APs under the conversion project. The Director of Architectural Services (DArchS) explained that sufficient space comparable to the size of one to two containers was required for installation of the new system. He added that the project had already covered all possible locations as revealed in the feasibility study. In response, Miss CHOY and Mr Patrick LAU said that they had come across similar systems in smaller sizes and urged the Administration to explore alternative methods to solve the space problem. PAS(F&EH)2,HWFB responded that an efficient system capable of storing a substantial volume of treated effluent for flushing purpose was required to meet the heavy usage demand of APs in popular tourist spots. Mr LAU considered that conscious effort should be made by the Administration to implement environment-friendly system where practicable.

16. Mr Patrick LAU further enquired whether the toilet facilities proposed under the conversion project could be used by the disabled. DD(A&D),FEHD replied that the provision of toilet facilities for the disabled would be subject to the physical constraints and access to the toilet for the disabled. Due to site constraints, only three disabled toilets would be constructed after alteration works for the 100 APs. Responding to Mr LAU's suggestion that the doors of the APs under the project should be re-designed to facilitate access for the disabled, PAS(F&EH)2,HWFB said that as the size of a standard toilet cubicle would be increased from 0.72 m² to 1.2 m² after conversion, the Administration could consider installing double-fold doors to facilitate usage by the disabled where

practicable.

17. Mr LI Kwok-ying noted that of the several hundreds of villages in Tai Po, only Po Sam Pai Village had been included in the conversion project. Mr LI expressed grave concern that it would take years for the Administration to implement improvements works especially for APs located near the major paths which were frequented by local villagers on a daily basis and hikers occasionally. Given that the villagers often complained about mosquitoes and foul smell problems in these APs, he asked what interim measures would be taken by the Administration to improve the situation.

18. DD(A&D),FEHD responded that the Administration had to implement conversion projects in phases due to resource constraint. Of the 100 APs proposed for conversion into flushing toilets, 14 were in Tai Po areas. Notwithstanding that, interim measures were taken by the Administration to address concerns raised by members of the public. By way of illustration, upon receipt of complaints on the hygiene condition of the AP in Tung Ping Chau near the ferry pier, the Administration had increased the frequency of cleansing and the provision of air refresher for improvement before long term solutions could be implemented. He said the Administration would look into complaints raised by local villagers on individual APs.

19. Ms CHAN Yuen-han stressed that it was important for the Administration to ensure the completion of the conversion project without delay and the clearance of construction and demolition (C&D) materials after work completed. DArchS said that the progress of the conversion projects would be closely monitored. He advised however that for APs in remote areas, the conversion works would take longer time to complete. As regards the removal of C&D materials, DArchS said that this was the contractor's responsibility as stipulated in the contract, and that payment would be withheld if the contractor failed to do so. Miss CHAN was not convinced and pointed out that C&D materials in the works sites along the trails above Kennedy Road and Tze Lo Lan Shan Path had not been cleared for months, and this had affected adversely the hikers and rambles in the vicinity. In this regard, ETWB undertook to take up the matter with the departments concerned.

20. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 708 – CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

PWSC(2005-06)18 60MM Improvement of facilities in the Specialist Outpatient Block of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital

21. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Health Services discussed the proposal at its meeting on 17 May 2005. Members of the Panel

unanimously supported the proposed works project for improvement of the facilities in the Specialist Outpatient (SOP) Block of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital and a reduction of waiting time for patients before service was provided for them.

22. Miss CHOY So-yuk expressed support for the proposal and urged the Administration to implement the project as early as practicable. Noting that the proposed improvement works would involve removal of ten trees and the planting of only 12 trees, she was dissatisfied with the limited number of trees proposed for planting under the project. DArchS explained that the areas occupied by the existing trees would be required for the construction of an additional lift tower annexed to the SOP Block for the provision of additional passenger lifts, and that the planting proposals represented the best efforts within the site constraints.

23. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Any other business

24. Mrs Selina CHOW requested the Administration to provide a response to her concern about the impact of the Administration's decision to postpone or shelve the 22 school construction projects originally scheduled for submission to PWSC in this legislative session on the Capital Works Programme, as well as the employment situation in the construction industry. The Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)³ undertook to provide a written reply after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's reply was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. PWSC75/04-05 on 7 June 2005.)

25. The meeting ended at 9:35 am.