

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 345/05-06
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA/1

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 24 October 2005, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Public officers attending** : **For item IV**
- Dr M J BROOM
Assistant Director/Water Policy
Environmental Protection Department
- Mr W TSUI
Assistant Director/Projects & Development
Drainage Services Department
- Mr T Y YUEN
Senior Engineer/Sewerage Projects
Drainage Services Department

For item V

Mr Eric CHAN
Assistant Director (Conservation) of Environmental
Protection

Mr LAY Chik-chuen
Assistant Director (Conservation) of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Conservation

Dr TSIM Siu-tai
Conservation Specialist of Tai Po Environmental
Association

Dr CHEUNG Ho-fai
Chairman of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

Dr Billy HAU
Director of Conservancy Association

Dr HUNG Wing-tat
Director of Conservancy Association

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

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

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant(1)4

Action

- I Confirmation of minutes**
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 69/05-06 — Minutes of the meeting held on
13 October 2005)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2005 were confirmed.

II Information paper issued since last meeting

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

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 74/05-06(01) — List of follow-up actions
LC Paper No. CB(1) 74/05-06(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 28 November 2005, at 2:30 pm -

- (a) Control plan on volatile organic compounds – outcome of consultation;
- (b) Restoration of Northwest New Territories landfills and Gin Drinker's Bay landfill – 2nd seven years aftercare work; and
- (c) Indoor air quality.

4. Members agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on Tuesday, 22 November 2005, at 2:30 pm to discuss the Lantau Concept Plan

5. Members also agreed to advance the meeting in December from 20 December to 15 December 2005 at 2:30 pm to facilitate the attendance of the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works to brief the Panel on the Road-map for the management of municipal solid waste in Hong Kong (2005-2014).

IV 4340DS "Port Shelter sewerage stage 3 - Sai Kung Area 4 and Mang Kung Uk sewerage"

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 74/05-06(03) — Paper provided by the Administration)

6. The Assistant Director/Projects & Development, Drainage Services Department (AD/P&D,DSD) gave a power-point presentation on the Administration's proposal to upgrade part of the project 4340DS "Port Shelter sewerage stage 3 – Sai Kung Area 4 and Mang Kung Uk sewerage" to Category A at an estimated cost of \$73.0 million in money-of-the-day prices to provide the trunk sewerage for Sai Kung Area 4.

(Post-meeting note: Copies of the presentation materials were circulated to members under LC Paper No. CB(1) 141/05-06(01).)

Cost

7. Noting that the annual recurrent cost of the proposed works would lead to an increase in the recurrent cost of providing sewage services by about 0.15%, Ms Miriam LAU enquired whether such an increase would be taken into account in determining the overall sewage charge. The Senior Engineer/Sewerage Projects,

DSD (SE/SP,DSD) said that while part of the costs would be absorbed by DSD, about \$1.5 million would have to be recouped under a cost recovery basis, which would be reflected in the overall sewage charge applicable to the territory as a whole rather than confining to Sai Kung area.

Treatment level

8. Mr WONG Yung-kan enquired about the level of sewage treatment to be adopted under the proposal. He was concerned about the adverse impact of treated effluent on the surrounding waters given the experience gained in the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme. To protect the unpolluted waters of Sai Kung, a higher level of sewage treatment would be required. SE/SP,DSD explained that the existing Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works (SKSTW) was a secondary sewage treatment plant. At present, SKSTW received and treated about 9 000 cubic metres (m³) of sewage per day. It provided biological treatment and was able to reduce the Biological Oxygen Demand to 20 milligrammes per litre. With the use of ultraviolet light for disinfection, the *E Coli* count had been reduced to a level of less than 1 000 units. About 90% of the pollutants were removed after treatment. The current treatment capacity of SKSTW was about 14 000 m³ per day and was able to cope with the increase in sewage arising from the future development of Sai Kung Area 4. SE/SP,DSD added that the outcome of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted in the area revealed that there was no significant impact on the surrounding waters as a result of the discharge of treated effluent from SKSTW.

9. Mr WONG Yung-kan found the *E Coli* level of 1 000 units unacceptable. He considered it necessary that the treatment level should be upgraded in an attempt to minimize pollution to the surrounding waters. SE/SP,DSD advised that the *E Coli* level of 1 000 units was the design standard which was set having regard to the water quality of the surrounding waters, and the need to meet the Water Quality Objectives.. As the treated, disinfected, effluent was conveyed by an outfall for disposal at a distance of about 500 metres away from SKSTW, the quality of water along the beaches of Sai Kung would unlikely be affected by the effluent taking into account the dispersal effect of sea water.

10. The Assistant Director/Water Policy, Environmental Protection Department (AD/WP,EPD) added that although the upper limit of *E Coli* was 1 000 units, the actual quality was much better than that. Statistics indicated that over the past five years, the average level of *E Coli* in the effluent varied between one and five units. EPD would continue to monitor the water quality to prevent deterioration after the expansion of the sewerage network. The Chairman considered that the standard of *E Coli* level should be tightened and her view was shared by Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr WONG Yung-kan. The Administration took note of members' view.

11. Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired if the occasional foul smell from Sai Kung beaches was a result of the odour generated from effluent discharge from SKSTW. He also pointed out that the proposed discharge location, which was within an inner bay and close to a residential development, might not be a good choice on account of the low dispersal effect. AD/P&D,DSD said that it was unlikely that the foul smell

was originated from the discharged effluent since the discharge location was quite a distance from Sai Kung beaches. SE/SP,DSD said that according to an EIA study on the Inner Port Shelter, the water currents in the area would provide the necessary dispersal effect. Besides, the discharged effluent, after secondary treatment at SKSTW, was already quite clean and not expected to generate much odour.

12. Mr WONG Yung-kan enquired whether the discharge location could be relocated further away from the inner bay to make use of the better dispersal effect which was necessary with the increased effluent discharge from the proposed expansion of the sewerage system. Mr LEE Wing-tat also expressed concern about the impact of increased effluent discharge on the water quality of nearby beaches. He pointed out that the effluent discharge from the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works (SCISTW) had already led to the closure of Tsuen Wan beaches and he did not want to see any similar recurrences. The Chairman however opined that the present situation was quite different as effluent from SKSTW had undergone secondary treatment with disinfection using ultraviolet light. Mr LAU Kong-wah asked if the Administration would conduct an assessment on the impact of increased effluent discharge on surrounding waters.

13. In response, AD/P&D,DSD said that the water quality was expected to improve significantly as the proposed sewerage trunk system would collect sewage from developments in Sai Kung Area 4 currently not connected to the existing system, which would otherwise be discharged untreated at the Inner Port Shelter. This would also help reduce the level of *E Coli* in beach water. SE/SP,DSD added that a technical study on future upgrading of SKSTW had been conducted and modelling studies on the impact of effluent discharge from SKSTW on beach water quality had also been carried out. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that members would need to be convinced that the increased effluent discharge arising from the proposed sewerage system would not adversely affect the quality of surrounding waters. To this end, the Administration was requested to provide an information note on the impact of the increased effluent discharge arising from the proposed sewerage system on surrounding waters, before the item was discussed at PWSC.

Admin

Trunk sewerage for Sai Kung Area 4

14. Ms Miriam LAU enquired if the proposed design capacity of 7 500 m³ of sewage per day for the trunk sewerage had provided room for further expansion to cater for developments in addition to those under planning. AD/P&D,DSD said that the proposed works would be able to serve all the planned developments in the Sai Kung Area 4. The Administration would keep the sewage planning under review taking into account of any increase in demand from new developments. SE/SP,DSD added that demographic studies were included in the planning of sewage infrastructure. In general, a 10% to 20% allowance was provided to cater for expansion in sewerage network. Meanwhile, the proposed sewerage system could be expanded to allow for increased sewage flows.

15. Noting that the sewage generated by existing developments at Sai Kung Area 4 was 50 m³ of sewage per day while the estimated sewage generation upon full development in 2016 was 3 750 m³ of sewage per day, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong queried the need to provide such a large reserve capacity of 7 500 m³ of sewage per day for the proposed sewerage works. As the existing sewerage system could be expanded to allow for increased flows, consideration could be given to providing the sewage facilities in phases to avoid over-provisioning. SE/SP,DSD said that the proposed capacity of 7 500 m³ of sewage per day would serve all the developments in Sai Kung Area 4 and cater for the planned expansion of the sewerage network to serve the environs upto Tai Mong Tsai and the more remote areas in Sai Kung. Plans were already underway for the provision of sewerage connections for Sha Ha and Tai Wan at the eastern part of Sai Kung. The provision of twin rising mains measuring 450 millimetre in diameter was considered appropriate to meet future demand.

16. Before concluding, the Chairman asked and members agreed that they supported the proposal in principle, and that the Administration could submit the proposal to PWSC. The Chairman also urged the Administration to expedite the provision of sewerage network to all rural villages.

V Pilot Scheme for Management Agreements under the New Nature Conservation Policy

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 2327/04-05(01) — Referral arising from the meeting between LegCo Members and members of the Heung Yee Kuk on 25 January 2005
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2327/04-05(02) — Referral arising from the meeting between LegCo Members and members of the Yuen Long District Council on 5 May 2005
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 64/05-06(01) — Paper provided by the Administration
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 88/05-06(01) — Updated background brief on nature conservation prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

17. The Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Conservation) (ADEP(C)) said that following the announcement of the New Nature Conservation Policy in November 2004, the Administration introduced the Pilot Scheme for Management Agreements (MA), which was aimed at enhancing the ecological values of the 12 priority conservation sites under private ownership. He added that four applications were received but one of the applicants had subsequently decided to withdraw their application. The remaining three applications involved land located at Fung Yuen and Long Valley. He then invited the applicants to explain their pilot projects.

18. With the use of a power point, Dr TSIM Siu-tai, Conservation Specialist of Tai Po Environmental Association (TPEA) explained the application of TPEA for the proactive management for butterfly conservation at the private land in Fung Yuen. He said that apart from cooperating with landowners or land operators to apply good practices for butterfly conservation, TPEA would try to enhance public awareness on conservation. In the long run, TPEA planned to operate and maintain the site with income from fund-raising programmes such as butterfly shows, sponsorships, conservation education programmes and product sales, etc. It was hoped that the project would be able to achieve fiscal balance in two years' time.

19. Dr CHEUNG Ho-fai, Chairman of Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS), explained HKBWS's proposed management scheme which was meant to form partnership with farmers to maintain and increase the biodiversity of Long Valley, especially for avifauna. The project would involve creation and maintenance of shallow water habitat, wet agricultural land, fallow dry agricultural land as well as farmland margin vegetation. Experience gained from the project would help determine which management scheme was most effective and appropriate to bird conservation in Long Valley. HKBWS had already gained support from local farmers, landowners and indigenous leaders. Income generated from organizing eco-tours would be used to extend the coverage of farming area of the project.

20. Dr Billy HAU, Director of Conservancy Association (CA) explained CA's proposed sustainable habitat management in Long Valley. He said that CA would cooperate with local farmers to manage their farmlands through Habitat Deterioration Prevention Agreement or Habitat Diversity Enhancement Agreement. Eco-tourism would be promoted to enrich the economy of Long Valley.

(Post-meeting note: Copies of the presentation materials were circulated to members under LC Paper No. CB(1)141/05-06(02).)

21. The Chairman declared interest that she was a member of CA as well as the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) Committee, and that she had taken part in the vetting of applications for funding under MA. She said that the purpose of the present meeting was for members to have a better understanding on the MA projects approved by the ECF Committee. A separate meeting, preferably with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works, would be held to discuss the policy aspects of nature conservation given that a proposal involving land exchange was received recently.

22. Noting that only two of the 12 priority sites identified for enhanced protection had been chosen for the implementation of MA, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong sought the Administration's views on whether the response to MA was considered acceptable. He also asked what further actions would be taken to conserve the remaining 10 which had remained undeveloped in view of the limited number of applications for MA. ADEP(C) explained that there were two types of pilot schemes, i.e. MA and private-public partnership (PPP), aiming to enhance the conservation values of the priority sites. The Administration

had so far received a total of nine applications for these schemes. These included three MA for two locations and six PPP for six different locations. Since these pilot schemes were new, the Administration would have to review their effectiveness in two to three years' time before considering the way forward.

23. Ms Miriam LAU noted that the purpose of MA was to encourage non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take part in conserving ecologically important sites with subsidy from ECF, which had already approved funding of about \$5 million for the three pilot projects for a period of two years. For MA projects to be sustainable, there was a need to introduce commercial elements as otherwise they would have to rely on continuous funding from ECF. Judging from the three applications, she held the view that these would unlikely be sustainable unless continuous funding was provided.

24. ADEP(C) explained that one of the main evaluation criteria in assessing applications was sustainability of the projects as funding would only be provided for a period of two years. As such, each proponent had been requested to explain the sustainability aspect of their application. In the case of the application from CA, farmers would be engaged in long-term cooperation for managing their land to achieve sustainable agriculture and nature conservation through the development of organic farming and establishment of a market for organic produce. As for the applications from HKBWS and TPEA, income generated from activities such as fund-raising programmes and eco-tours would be used to finance the conservation of sites. Dr HUNG Wing-tat, Director of CA, said that CA would not be relying on fund raising programmes to finance its project. Instead, it would undertake to buy 25% of the produce from farming activities in the protected site. In addition to the establishment of a green flea market for organic produce, a network for direct sale of the produce to hotels and restaurants would be developed. The successful implementation of the project would encourage other farmers to take part in sustainable agriculture, which in turn would enhance nature conservation.

25. Ms Miriam LAU said that while the proposals from the three proponents were worth supporting, the capability of these projects to meet the conservation objectives had yet to be seen. Besides, the question of sustainability still remained since apart from CA's proposal which included the sale of organic produce, commercial yields seemed to be lacking in the other two projects. The discontinuation of Government subsidy after expiry of the two-year period would render the non-commercial projects not sustainable in the long run. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong also expressed concern on the sustainability of these non-commercial projects in the absence of Government subsidy. He said that the reliance on fund raising for these projects was not sustainable in the long run and in the end, the Government would be subsidizing an environmental activity rather than a sustainable project. This would run contrary to the original intent of MA. Mr Martin LEE echoed that these pilot projects would need to have public support.

26. Dr TSIM Siu-tai/TPEA said that active conservation works would be carried out to enhance the heterogeneity within the habitat of abandoned agricultural lands. TPEA would endeavour to promote eco-tours and environmental education

programmes to ensure that the project would continue well after the two-year period. He was confident that with the seed money from ECF, the project would become self sufficient in the long run.

27. Dr Billy HAU/CA said that sites with high ecological value were of interest to the public as evidenced by the large number of tourists. However, eco-tours were not well organized in the past and CA was determined to develop and promote these tours for the enjoyment of the public. The North District Council was also keen to develop eco-tours and had been carrying upgrading works in different parts of Long Valley in an attempt to promote eco-tourism. With the co-hosting of the 2008 Olympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong, opportunity could be taken to further promote eco-tours at Long Valley which was right next to the equestrian facilities. CA would endeavour to facilitate the development of eco-tourism in the area.

28. Ms Miriam LAU then enquired how CA could encourage farmers to participate in organic farming which was not new to Hong Kong. Dr HUNG Wing-tat/CA said that although the project was on a pilot basis, CA was confident that it would succeed. This was because CA was very familiar with the site and the way of thinking of indigenous farmers. With CA's undertaking to buy the produce and to provide a guaranteed income, together with its technical support to increase productivity, the farmers should be willing to participate in the project. Besides, the site involved was only about 30 000 square feet and considered to be of a manageable scale. Furthermore, with the promotion of eco-tours in Long Valley, some commercial activities had been developed, including a bean curd manufacturing company which was patronized by many tourists. It was hoped that these eco-tours would bring about economic benefits to the local community. The financial gains from farming and commercial activities would enrich the economy of the protected sites and ensure their sustainability.

29. Mr WONG Yung-kan doubted that the pilot projects would have the support of local farmers who had all along been practicing organic farming using traditional methods. ADEP(C) explained that the three proponents had spent a lot of efforts in an attempt to enter MA with farmers and landowners with a view to better conserving the sites. The farmers would be taught new farming techniques which would not only provide more economical gains but also preserve the ecological value of the sites. These efforts would bring about mutual benefits to all parties concerned.

30. Mr WONG Yung-kan expressed concern about the spread of avian flu by migratory fowls and emphasized the need to prevent the problem. ADEP(C) said that the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had stepped up efforts against the spread of avian flu, such as increasing the number of tests on fowl samples from 300 to 500 a month. The situation would be closely monitored. He added that bird watching activities would unlikely increase the risk of human contracting avian flu since bird watchers were not in close contact with the birds.

31. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that the Pilot Scheme on MA was commendable as it would promote cooperation between Government and NGOs to jointly conserve protected sites of high ecological value. However, there was a need to assess the success or otherwise of these projects. Consideration should be given to assessing the diversity of butterfly species in Fung Yuen and the biodiversity in Long Valley, the latter of which involved the rare habitat of mangroves. He added that more should be made to ensure the sustainability of these projects. ADEP(C) said that EPD and AFCD would closely monitor the progress of the three pilot projects. It was hoped that in two years' time, these projects would not only be sustainable but also help in encouraging public participation in conserving the sites. The three proponents were expected to provide assessments on the ecological value of the protected sites with the assistance of AFCD at the end of the two-year period. The Assistant Director (Conservation) of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation added that the three proponents would be reporting to AFCD every three months on the progress of their projects. Biodiversity studies on the individual sites would be performed by the proponents, to be confirmed by AFCD through an independent analysis.

VI Any other business

Proposed duty visit to the Mainland

32. Referring to the letter from the Director of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Guangdong Province to the President of the Legislative Council dated 18 October 2005, the Chairman sought members' views on the need for a duty visit to Guangdong and possibly Shanghai to observe the latest development in environmental protection. There were a number of environmental projects in the Mainland which were worth visiting. These included closed aqueduct for Dongjiang water, wind farms in Shantou, green lake in Heyuan, ecological park in Zhuhai, sewage treatment facilities and nature conservation education farms in Guangzhou, waste segregation centres and recycling factories in Pudong, photovoltaic systems in Jiangsu, organic farms in Sung Ming Island off Shanghai as well as solar energy facilities in Jiao Tong University etc. Mr Martin LEE expressed support for the visit and suggested that an initial plan should be worked out between the Chairman and the relevant Mainland authorities before presenting it to the Panel. As to whether the visit should be confined to Guangdong, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong opined that, depending on the nature of the visit, the destination might include other provinces as well. He added said that apart from those state-of-the-art facilities, opportunity should be taken to visit those polluting industries with a view to identifying measures to resolve the problem. The Chairman agreed to liaise with the Mainland authorities on the arrangements for the proposed visit.

33. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:35 pm.