

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1926/06-07
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA/1

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 28 May 2007, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP (Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man

Member attending : Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP

Public officers attending : **For item IV**

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Carlson K S CHAN
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (4)

Mr David WONG
Principal Environmental Protection Officer
(Cross-Boundary & International)

Dr Shermann FONG
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Cross-Boundary
& International) 3

Hong Kong Observatory

Mr YEUNG Kai-hing, JP
Assistant Director (Development, Research and
Administration)

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr Michael CHEUNG
Chief Engineer/Energy Efficiency A

For item V

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Raymond FAN
Deputy Director (2)

Dr Malcolm BROOM
Assistant Director (Water Policy)

Mr David W K CHAN
Officer-in-charge (Water Policy Coordination)

Drainage Services Department

Mr W H KO
Assistant Director (Sewage Services)

Mr W W CHUI
Chief Engineer (Harbour Area Treatment Scheme)

For item VI

Ms Anissa WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (Environment)/Director of Environmental
Protection

Mr Raymond FAN
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Alfred LEE
Assistant Director (Waste Management Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

**Attendance by
Invitation** : **For item IV**

Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Dr LAM Ka-se
Associate Professor
Department of Civil and Structural Engineering

Civic Exchange

Ms Christine LOH
Chief Executive Officer

Greenpeace China

Ms Frances YEUNG
Climate and Energy Campaigner

Consumers Acting for People and the Environment

Ms Betty LEE
Project Coordinator

Civic Party

Miss Christine HUNG
Spokesperson, Air Quality Group

Association of Engineering Professionals in Society Ltd

IR YIM Kin-ping
Senior Vice Chairman

The Conservancy Association

Mr Peter LI
Campaign Manager

Green Sense

Mr Jan LAI
Vice-president

Friends of the Earth (HK)

Mr CHU Hon-keung
Environmental Affairs Manager

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Ir WONG Kwok-lai
President

Democratic Party

Mr Gary FAN
Deputy Spokesman of Environmental Affairs

Clear the Air

Mr Christian MASSET
Chairman

WWF Hong Kong

Mr Liam SALTER
Head, Climate Programme

Individual

Mr WU Chi-man

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) 1664/06-07 | — Minutes of the special meeting held on 28 March 2007 |
| LC Paper No. CB(1) 1665/06-07 | — Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2007) |

The minutes of the special meeting held on 28 March 2007 and the regular meeting held on 23 April 2007 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

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

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1432/06-07(01) — Action Agenda proposed by the Focus Group and extracts from the minutes of meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry on 13 March 2007

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1597/06-07(01) — Supplementary information paper on "Chemical Waste Treatment Centre (CWTC)" provided by the Administration regarding follow-on operation contract for and installation of additional facilities to receive and treat clinical waste at CWTC

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1624/06-07(01) — Referral arising from meeting between LegCo Members and members of Wong Tai Sin District Council on the traffic noise at New Clearwater Bay Road near Choi Wan Estate

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1624/06-07(02) — Referral arising from meeting between LegCo Members and members of Kwun Tong District Council on the problem of railway noise at MTR stations and traffic noise along Lei Yue Mun Road

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following subjects at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 25 June 2007, at 2:30 pm-

(a) Provision of sewerage facilities at Yung Shue Wan and Sok Kwu Wan on Lamma Island and Tseng Tau Chung Tsuen in Tuen Mun; and

- (b) PWP Item No. 800TH – Retrofitting of noise barriers at Kwun Tong Bypass.

Item (b) was originally scheduled for discussion at the present meeting but was deferred to the next meeting to give way to the discussion on the proposed environmental levy on plastic shopping bags under agenda item VI.

4. Mr SIN Chung-kai noted that the allegation that the South East New Territories Landfill would be expanded to encroach part of the nearby country parks had given rise to much concern from local residents. Ms Emily LAU echoed that the Administration should be asked to provide a written response to clarify the matter. The Chairman agreed to follow up with the Administration on the subject.

IV. Greenhouse gas emissions and their effects on global warming

Meeting with Dr K S LAM, Department of Civil & Structural Engineering, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(03))

5. Dr K S LAM said that Hong Kong had been performing well in controlling greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Despite the rise in electricity consumption by 75% and the use of gas by 80% during the period from 1990 to 2005, GHG emissions in Hong Kong had only increased by 11% which compared favorably with the global increase of 28% in GHG emissions. To tackle the problem of global warming, the Kyoto Protocol had set a target to reduce GHG emissions by at least 5% below 1990 levels during the commitment period from 2008 to 2012. To meet the target, efforts should be made to improve energy efficiency, use cleaner fuels for electricity generation, and reduce vehicular emissions. Some specific measures would include switching from air-cooled to water-cooled air-conditioning systems, use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to replace coal in electricity generation and use of environment friendly vehicles.

Meeting with Civic Exchange

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(04))

6. Ms Christine LOH, Chief Executive Officer of Civic Exchange, did not agree with the Administration that Hong Kong was a small emitter since the lower level of emission was a result of the relocation of most of its polluting industries across the border. A recent public poll revealed that Hong Kong residents were both aware and concerned about the problem of global warming. Referring to the Administration's initiatives as set out in its information paper, she pointed out that Hong Kong lacked an aggressive policy on demand side management. As such, a review of the Scheme of Control Agreement for the two power companies in Hong Kong was necessary. There was also a need to introduce a fuel mix on the use of renewable energy (RE), nuclear energy, coal, and LNG for electricity generation. The Administration should endeavour to achieve higher saving in energy efficiency and conservation by adopting

mandatory rather than voluntary measures. The proposed re-organization of Policy Bureaux allowing environment and energy policies to be placed under the same bureau would offer significant opportunities for Hong Kong to consider a climate change policy.

Meeting with Greenpeace China

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(05))

7. Ms Frances YEUNG, Climate and Energy Campaigner, expressed concern about the increase in GHG emissions. As a cosmopolitan city, Hong Kong had the responsibility to reduce its GHG emissions. Efforts should be made to reduce GHG emissions through measures, such as large-scale development of RE and control of emission from power plants. As a first step, Greenpeace would suggest the mandatory replacement of tungsten light bulbs with the more energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), in line with the practice in Holland, Canada and Australia. As the proposal was easy to implement on account of the wide availability of CFLs, she hoped that the Administration would give full support to the proposal to demonstrate its commitment to energy conservation. She also considered it necessary for Hong Kong to follow other major world cities such as New York, London and Toronto to map out its own policy to reduce global warming, including emission targets for GHG and a timetable for achieving the targets.

Meeting with Consumers Acting for People and the Environment

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(06))

8. Ms Betty LEE, Project Coordinator, said that a recent survey revealed that the average amount of paper used by each Hong Kong resident per year was six times higher than that their counterparts in the world. Last year, Hong Kong had used 1.1 million tonnes of paper, representing the felling of a large number of trees and the emission of large quantity of carbon dioxide during the paper manufacturing process. Amid the global warming crisis, Hong Kong would need to take proactive measures to address the problem, one of which would be to economize on the use of paper through the use of electronic means, such as promotion of online payment of bills as 70% of people in Hong Kong were internet users. It was disappointed that Government departments like the Water Supplies Department had refused to arrange for the use of online payment. There was also a need for legislation to ban junk mails which had given rise to much wastage of papers, as most of these would be disposed of in landfills. The Administration should also take the lead in the use of recycled paper.

Meeting with Civic Party (CP)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(07))

9. Miss Christine HUNG, Spokesperson, said that to address the problem of global warming, CP would suggest the following -

- (a) an inter-departmental working group led by the Chief Secretary should be set up to formulate and implement policies to reduce global warming;

- (b) an adaptation strategy should be worked out to mitigate consequences associated with global warming;
- (c) a partnership approach should be taken so that all stakeholders would be invited to exchange views on measures to reduce global warming; and
- (d) a regional perspective should be adopted as global warming was a worldwide issue of international concern.

Meeting with Association of Engineering Professionals in Society Ltd (AEPS)
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(08))

10. Ir YIM Kin-ping, Senior Vice Chairman, said that the Government should adopt proactive and effective measures to combat global warming which had not only led to rising sea levels and climate changes but also given rise to economic, political and sustainability problems. Apart from waste management and emission control measures, the latter of which included the use of alternative fuel for electricity generation and the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles, AEPS would also recommend the Government to -

- (a) undertake scientific research on global warming;
- (b) promote a Clean Development Mechanism among corporations with a view to reducing GHG emissions;
- (c) develop a low carbon community through environmental practices; and
- (d) establish a "climate change" environmental and financial investment products centre to encourage investments on environmental industries.

Meeting with The Conservancy Association (CA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(09))

11. Mr Peter LI, Campaign Manager, said that the comparatively lower level of GHG emissions Hong Kong was attributed to the relocation of manufacturing industries to the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region which had also transferred the emission problem. To reduce GHG emissions in the PRD Region, CA recommended the following -

- (a) implementation of carbon dioxide emissions trading scheme;
- (b) introduction of proactive compensation schemes such as tree planting to offset the emissions and environmental degradation associated with large scale infrastructural projects which generated large amounts of GHG; and

- (c) minimization on the demand for electricity through enhancing air ventilation and promoting energy efficient practices and in this connection, Government should not require its staff to wear jackets and neckties to work during the summer months in an attempt to reduce electricity consumption on air-conditioning.

Meeting with Green Sense

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(10))

12. Mr Jan LAI, Vice-president, said that Green Sense would suggest implementing the following measures to reduce global warming -

- (a) introduction of electricity generation surcharge on power companies and electricity tax on consumers as a means to reduce GHG and electricity consumption;
- (b) introduction of legislative control on advertisement/signboard lightings which consumed a lot of electricity and caused nuisance to the public;
- (c) mandatory replacement of tungsten light bulbs with the more energy-efficient CFLs; and
- (d) implementation of greening policy on a broader scale.

Meeting with Friends of the Earth (HK) (FoE)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1395/06-07(01))

13. Mr CHU Hon-keung, Environmental Affairs Manager, said that while the prevailing energy policy could ensure a ready and reliable supply of electricity to allow for greater economic development, it failed to take account of environmental concerns. It was hoped that with the proposed reorganization of Government structure to place the environment and energy portfolios under the same Bureau, the energy policy could be rectified such that cleaner fuels would be used for electricity generation, and measures to conserve energy would be put in place. Education on climate change should also be stepped up to apprise the general public the measures to reduce global warming. It was worth noting that apart from rising sea levels and higher temperatures, global warming could also contribute to the higher incurrence of infectious diseases. Therefore, FOE would support the restoration of the Co-ordination Group on Global Climate to facilitate the communication and support among Government departments.

Meeting with The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(11))

14. Ir WONG Kwok-lai, President, briefly took members through HKIE's submission. He said that HKIE would suggest the following measures to reduce GHG emissions -

- (a) maximization of the use of RE developed from biofuels, wind and solar energy;
- (b) promotion of LNG in electricity generation and fuel cell in commercial application as these would cut down on carbon dioxide emission and stall the global warming effect; and
- (c) energy conservation through the introduction of an Energy Efficient Labelling Scheme as well as energy tax (or carbon tax).

Meeting with Democratic Party (DP)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(12))

15. Mr Gary FAN, Deputy Spokesman of Environmental Affairs of DP, queried the Administration's assertion that the GHG emission problem in Hong Kong was not serious. He pointed out that Hong Kong's contribution to GHG emissions was not at all small given that it was not an industrialized city. He was also disappointed at the slow pace of the Government in developing environmental measures. Apart from signing the "Clean Air Charter", very little had been done to encourage and assist the factories set up by Hong Kong enterprises in the Mainland to reduce their GHG emissions. While the Mainland was regarded as a developing country under the Kyoto Protocol and was not required to take measures to restrict GHG emissions, Hong Kong, being a developed city, should make attempts to reduce its emissions through the use of LNG to replace coal in electricity generation, development of RE, control of idling vehicles, introduction of energy tax, development of energy conservation measures and provision of green rooftops etc.

Meeting with Clear The Air

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(13))

16. Mr Christian MASSET, Chairman, said that while Hong Kong was not obliged to reduce GHG emissions under the Kyoto Protocol, it should take the lead in reducing its emissions because it was capable of doing so. Hence, Clear The Air supported the installation of flue-gas desulphurization facilities by CLP Power Limited, and acceleration of LNG supply. However, the proposed LNG terminal on the Sokos Island was in many respects non-sustainable and in contradiction with the interests of Hong Kong. More efforts should be put on demand side management of electricity generation and a review of the Scheme of Control Agreement was necessary to limit the permitted rate of return of power companies, to prevent them from selling excess electricity to the Mainland and to implement energy savings measures.

Meeting with WWF Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1726/06-07(01))

17. Mr Liam SALTER, Head/Climate Programme, said that GHG emissions were rising in Hong Kong and measures should be taken to reduce emissions. He said that

Hong Kong was at least two years behind the Mainland in using clean energy, setting RE targets and promoting energy efficiency measures. There was a need to set up a specifically designated Climate Change Taskforce within the Government to respond to climate change.

Meeting with Mr WU Chi-man

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(14))

18. Mr WU said that the use of electric dryers for drying of clothing was not only electricity-consuming but was also a source of GHG emissions. To reduce reliance on electric dryers and to avoid blocking air-ventilation for hanging clothes indoors, he would suggest that more outdoor spaces within residential developments should be provided to enable residents to hang dry their clothing and linens. Consideration should also be given to allowing residents to hang dry their clothing and linens in the open spaces of public parks and playgrounds at certain times of the day. In addition, buildings should be designed in such a way to optimize the use of natural lighting and improve ventilation which would in turn help conserve energy.

Submission from deputation not attending the meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1726/06-07(02) — Submission from the CLP Holdings Ltd)

Meeting with the Administration

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(15) — Paper provided by the Administration
IN14/06-07 — Information note entitled “Policies and measures for mitigation of climate change” prepared by the Research and Library Services Division)

19. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (4) thanked deputations for their views. He said that the Mainland, as a developing country, was not required to commit to any GHG emission target under the Kyoto Protocol. The same arrangement was applied to Hong Kong as part of the Mainland under the Kyoto Protocol. Notwithstanding, Hong Kong had been making strenuous efforts to reduce GHG emissions, albeit it was a relatively small GHG emitter given its small size, low electricity consumption and industrial activities being relocated to the Mainland. The efficient transport network also played a part in reducing GHG emissions as most of the people used mass transport. The per capita emission in Hong Kong was around 6.4 to 6.5 tonnes in recent years, which was lower than most of the developed economies such as European Union and Singapore. The carbon intensity in Hong Kong also fell by 41% between 1990 and 2005.

20. DDEP(4) added that the largest source of GHG emissions in Hong Kong was the energy sector, mainly electricity generation, accounting for over 60% of the total emissions, dovetailed by the transport sector which contributed to about 16% of the total emissions. The current fuel mix of power generation in terms of coal, natural gas and nuclear was 55%, 23% and 22% respectively. To meet the stringent emission reduction targets set for 2010, local power companies had to, inter alia, use

cleaner fuels for electricity generation. Notwithstanding, more could be done in energy conservation and the Administration would endeavour to enlist public support in this respect. On the way forward, DDEP(4) said that the Administration would be commissioning a new round of study later in the year to tap into the findings of earlier studies made in 2000 and 2004 as well as that of international studies to assess the impacts of climate change in Hong Kong and to see what other measures should be adopted. The study would be steered by an inter-departmental working group. Noting that the study would take about one to two years to complete, the Chairman expressed concern that its findings could not be published in time before finalization of the Scheme of Control Agreement in 2008.

21. As the 2007 International Conference on Climate Change would be held in Hong Kong on 31 May 2007, Ms Emily LAU hoped that the Chief Executive would address the Conference on the measures to be adopted by Hong Kong to reduce global warming. It was also hoped that the placing of the environment and energy portfolios under the same bureau would enable the Panel on Environmental Affairs to consider the energy policy in line with the environmental policy. She shared deputations' views that the public played an important role in the reduction of GHG emissions, but the proposed drying of clothing and linens in public places might not be feasible. She enquired about the measures which could be taken by the public to assist in the reduction of GHG emissions. Ir YIM Kin-ping/AEPS said that London had been advocating the "zero emission city" and he hoped that more ideas could evolve from members of the public on how GHG emissions could be reduced. The Chairman said that ideas from the public on how changes in daily habits could assist in the reduction of GHG emissions were welcome.

22. Miss CHOY So-yuk was disappointed that Hong Kong had not made much effort in reducing GHG emissions. The low emissions per capita were mainly due to the relocation of industries to the Mainland. She pointed out that the Mainland had been making a lot of efforts to reduce global warming and had surpassed Hong Kong in terms of targets and means to reduce GHG emissions. Miss TAM Heung-man sought deputations' views on the efficacy of measures taken by the Administration to reduce GHG emissions and whether additional measures were necessary to improve the situation. Ms Frances YEUNG/Greenpeace said that the recent rise in total GHG emissions from Hong Kong had showed that the Administration had not taken sufficient measures to reduce GHG emissions. By way of illustration, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department had only issued guidelines to encourage energy efficiency but no mandatory measures had been adopted. If actions were not promptly taken, the per capita emission would exceed that of the 1990s. Ms Christine LOH/Civic Exchange said that a stepwise approach should be adopted to mitigate climate change. The Government should take the lead in constructing energy-efficient buildings and this should be reflected in the Tamar Development Project, which was expected to make use of the latest technological advancement in energy efficiency. Mr Liam SALTER/WWF also questioned the 41% reduction in carbon intensity from 1990 to 2005 as claimed by the Government. He pointed out that the United States had recorded significant reduction in carbon intensity and yet it had the worst GHG emissions. He said that if per capita emission data were used,

these would have to be compared with economies which were structured in the same way since the reduction in carbon intensity might be attributable to the rapid growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

23. Through the Chair, DDEP(4) said that the Mainland had set a target to reduce energy consumption as against GDP by 20%. While one of the reasons why Hong Kong's carbon intensity had fallen by 41% between 1990 and 2005 might have been due to the fact that the rate of economic growth was much quicker than the rate of carbon dioxide generation, the much reduced carbon intensity was also indicative of the joint efforts made by the Administration and the public in reducing GHG emissions over the past decade.

Admin 24. Mr SIN Chung-kai thanked deputations for their valuable views, most of which were worthy of further follow up. As the Panel was responsible to monitor the progress of measures to reduce GHG emissions, he requested the Administration to analyze the deputations' views and to advise whether and when actions would be taken to address their concerns. To facilitate future discussion, a summary of deputations' views would be prepared for the Administration's response which would be circulated to members and deputations for reference. The response should also explain the set up of the inter-departmental working group on climate change, the additional measures which could be taken to reduce GHG emissions, and the reason why no emission reduction target had been set for GHG.

25. Given the increased public concern about global warming, the Chairman said that the Panel might wish to revisit the subject, particularly when reviewing the Scheme of Control Agreements of the two local power companies. The subject was therefore included in the list of outstanding items to be discussed by the Panel. Ms Emily LAU considered that after the appointment of the head of the new Environment Bureau on 1 July 2007, he/she should be invited to exchange views with the Panel on energy and environment policies, in particular the subject of global warming.

V. 351DS – Harbour Area Treatment Scheme, stage 2A – planning and design of the upgrading works of Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works and the preliminary treatment works

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(16) — Paper provided by the Administration)

26. The Chief Engineer (Harbour Area Treatment Scheme), Drainage Services Department (CE(HATS)) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to initiate the next most urgent works package for the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) stage 2A, namely the planning and design of the remaining core works of this phase, inter alia, the expansion works and the disinfection facility at the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works (SCISTW), and the upgrading works of the eight preliminary treatment works (PTWs) along the northern and western shores of Hong Kong Island. These design items would be carried out in parallel with the design of

the sewage conveyance system currently in progress such that different components of the stage 2A works dovetail with one another in a timely fashion.

27. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the nature of the upgrading works of the eight preliminary treatment works along the northern and western shores of Hong Kong Island. CE(HATS) said that at present, these treatment works only provided a very preliminary screening process for the sewage collected. As such, upgrading works were required to enhance the treatment level. The treated effluent would then be conveyed by way of underground tunnels to SCISTW for further treatment.

28. Miss TAM Heung-man said that members and green groups were concerned about the impact of sewage effluents, which had only undergone chemically enhanced primary treatment (CEPT), on the marine environment. Hence, they were all supportive of the use of secondary sewage treatment in line with the practice of many other cities in the world. She enquired about the circumstances under which secondary sewage treatment would be adopted and the mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of water to prevent it from further deterioration. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) (DDEP(2)) said that sewage collected would undergo CEPT and disinfection under HATS stage 2A. CE(HATS) explained that HATS stage 1 involved the collection and treatment of sewage from Kowloon and northeast Hong Kong by way of CEPT. Sewage from the remaining northern and western shores of Hong Kong Island would be collected and disinfected at SCISTW under stage 2A. Water monitoring results had indicated that the harbour water quality had significantly improved following stage 1. It was expected that further improvements could be made following the implementation of stage 2A. The Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Water Policy) (ADEP(WP)) said that a comprehensive review would be conducted in 2010/2011 taking into account water quality trends and sewage flow built-up with a view to deciding on the timing for implementation of biological treatment under stage 2B. The key parameters, such as the dissolved oxygen and ammonia levels in the water, were being monitored as these would play a part in deciding when stage 2B should proceed.

29. Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired whether stage 2A would improve the water quality of Tsuen Wan beaches which had been closed following the implementation of stage 1. CE(HATS) explained that part of the disinfection facilities under stage 2A would be advanced for completion by 2009. It was expected that the bacteria levels in the treated effluent would be significantly reduced, thereby improving the water quality of Tsuen Wan beaches. The Chairman asked if Tsuen Wan beaches could be re-opened, and if so when. DDEP(2) explained that the present funding proposal was meant to provide for the planning and design of the expansion works and the disinfection facilities at SCISTW, as well as the upgrading works of the eight preliminary treatment works along the northern and western shores of Hong Kong Island. It was expected that the Tsuen Wan beaches could be re-opened to the public after the disinfection facilities under stage 2A were operational.

30. Ms Emily LAU noted that it appeared that the Administration had decided to adopt chlorination/dechlorination for disinfection under stage 2A despite the outcome

of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had yet to be released. CE(HATS) said that the relevant EIA had been in progress for some time and the EIA report would be submitted to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) soon. So far, the studies had indicated that disinfection using chlorination/dechlorination was environmentally acceptable, reliable, flexible and cost effective. Upon receipt of the EIA report, EPD would conduct technical vetting and after that the EIA report would be made available for public inspection. After EPD had approved the EIA report, funding from the Finance Committee would be sought for the construction of the advance disinfection facilities. As environmentalists were concerned about the impact of chlorination/dechlorination on the marine environment, Ms LAU stressed that the outcome of EIA should be made available as soon as possible to allay their concerns. It was hoped that a consensus could be reached before implementation.

31. Mr WONG Yung-kan was concerned that even with the provision of disinfection facilities, the water quality of the beaches could not be improved. He enquired if members would be consulted on the planning and design of HATS stage 2A and the subsequent stage 2B. CE(HATS) said that as the disinfection facilities to be provided under stage 2A would be able to remove 99.9% of the bacteria in the treated effluent, the water quality of the harbour would be significantly improved and the closed beaches in Tsuen Wan could be re-opened to the public. Part of the disinfection facilities would be advanced for operation in 2009 to allow for the early re-opening of Tsuen Wan beaches.

32. The Chairman requested a breakdown of the funding of \$105.6 million. She also enquired whether the consultancy would be awarded to a single or multiple consultant(s). CE(HATS) advised that of the \$105.6 million, about \$75 million would be used for consultancy fees, \$14 million for investigations and surveys, \$5 million for water quality monitoring, \$8 million for contingencies and \$2.6 million for price adjustments. The proposed planning and design of the expansion and upgrading works at SCISTW and the eight PTWs would be grouped under one single consultancy. The Administration was in the process of selecting consultants for the consultancy and a decision had yet to be reached.

33. Miss CHOY So-yuk questioned the rationale for awarding the contract to a single consultant. She opined that the engagement of more consultants for the project would invite more ideas in the design and planning for the project. Besides, different types of works, such as tunnel construction and technological application, would require different expertise. CE(HATS) explained that as a major part of the consultancy work was the planning and design of the treatment facilities at SCISTW which would involve very substantial design efforts to ensure not only that the operation of stage 1 would not be unduly disturbed but also that the whole HATS system would be operated as one integrated system, it would be more desirable to engage consultants under one consultancy for the required services as difficulties might arise when more consultancies were involved. He also clarified the currently proposed consultancy would not include the implementation of the sewage conveyance system which was being carried out under a previously approved consultancy.

Admin

34. At members' request, the Administration undertook to provide, before the relevant Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) meeting, an information paper setting out the breakdown of the consultancy cost, the scope of work of the consultancy, whether there was any overlapping between the consultancy and the on-going EIA, and the reasons for using a single consultant.

35. In concluding, members raised no objection for the proposal to be submitted to PWSC for consideration.

VI. A proposal on an environmental levy on plastic shopping bags

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1666/06-07(17) — Paper provided by the Administration)

36. The Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment) (PSETW(E)) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to introduce an environmental levy on plastic shopping bags by highlighting the salient points of the information paper.

37. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that DP Members were supportive of the proposal in principle as it would reduce the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags. Noting that the first phase of the proposal would only cover chain or large supermarkets, convenience stores and personal health and beauty stores, he considered that other retailers, including wet market stall operators, should be asked to make similar efforts to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags. As no retail outlets should be exempted from the levy requirement, he enquired about the Administration's plans for the next phase of the scheme. Consideration should also be given to requiring retailers to use biodegradable bags.

38. PSETW(E) said that there was a clear delineation on the scope of the first phase of the scheme. It was hoped that the proposed environmental levy would help change the public's habit and lead to longer-term and more sustained reduction in overall use of plastic shopping bags. Following the introduction of the relevant legislation and the implementation of the scheme, the Administration would work out a timetable for the review of the effectiveness of the scheme. Through publicity and public education, retail outlets which were not covered under the first phase of the scheme would be requested to make voluntary efforts to reduce plastic shopping bag usage. In fact, the voluntary efforts currently made by supermarket chains had been quite successful in reducing the use of plastic shopping bags. She stressed that the introduction of the environmental levy was not meant to increase revenue, but to change the public's habit.

39. Ms Emily LAU said that she would support the proposed environmental levy in principle, albeit it was very controversial. She considered it more equitable to apply the levy across the board to all retail outlets rather than confining the scope to only 4%, although the latter might have contributed to 20% of plastic shopping bags being disposed of in landfills. PSETW(E) said that the Administration considered it

not feasible from the outset to impose a blanket requirement of plastic shopping bag levy on all retail outlets. To ensure a successful introduction of the levy and an effective administration of the scheme, a phased approach was adopted to include chain or large supermarkets, convenience stores and personal health and beauty stores in the initial stage. The Administration would take into account the amount of plastic shopping bags distributed by different retail outlets before deciding on the scope of expansion in the next phase of the scheme.

40. Ms Miriam LAU said that Members of the Liberal Party would support the proposal in principle, but noted that there were divergent views on how the scheme would be implemented. They stressed the need to ensure the effectiveness of the scheme in reducing the use of plastic shopping bags on the one hand and to minimize the inconvenience to the general public on the other. As the proposal would require a change in the public's habit, publicity efforts were required to assist in the adaptation to the change. She requested an update on the overseas experience in implementing environmental levy on plastic shopping bags, which had been carried out in Ireland and Taiwan. Ms Emily LAU recalled that back in the 1970s and 1980s, the supermarkets in England were already charging its customers for plastic shopping bags. The relevant experience would also be useful. While supporting in principle the proposed environmental levy to discourage the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags, Miss TAM Heung-man noted that when the environmental levy was first introduced in 2002 in Ireland, there was a 90% reduction in the use of plastic shopping bags. However, there was a rise in the use of plastic shopping bags a few years after implementation of the levy. As a result, the Irish Government had decided to increase the levy significantly (from HK\$1.40 to HK\$2.60 per bag) in 2007. She was concerned that Hong Kong would be facing the same problem, and that it would need to raise the environmental levy after a few years.

Admin 41. PSETW(E) agreed to provide information on the overseas experience in implementing environmental levy on plastic shopping bags. She however pointed out that different countries had different experiences in implementing the environmental levy. Ireland had to increase the environmental levy due to a rebound in the use of plastic shopping bags a few years after implementation of the levy. Taiwan had also introduced some adjustments to the environmental levy. She said that the Administration would regularly monitor the effectiveness of the levy when implemented to ensure that the intended purpose of reducing the indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags was served.

42. Miss CHOY So-yuk said that she would support the proposed environmental levy on plastic shopping bags, which in her view was feasible. She however noted that there had been a lot of misunderstandings on the proposed levy. By way of illustration, some people thought that the levy would apply to wet markets and not supermarkets which in fact was the other way round. She hoped that the Administration would make an effort to clarify any misunderstanding before implementing the scheme. She also enquired about the mechanism to be adopted for the recycling of used plastic bags which was an important aspect of the scheme. PSETW(E) agreed that publicity and public education were essential to promote

behavioural change. She said that the Administration had issued an information paper on the proposal to District Councils and uploaded the paper on the EPD website as well. More publicity efforts would be made to facilitate public understanding on the scheme and to encourage the public to avoid indiscriminate use of plastic shopping bags. As regards the recycling of plastic shopping bags, she said that this could be implemented through the waste separation schemes currently in progress.

43. Miss TAM Heung-man stressed the need to ensure that the environmental levy would be contributed towards Government revenue and would not be pocketed by the supermarket chains. PSETW(E) said that an enforcement mechanism would be put in place upon implementation of the environmental levy. Members would be apprised of the mechanism when the relevant legislation was introduced into the Legislative Council.

44. Noting that the scheme would cover quite a number of supermarkets and convenience stores, and that some plastic bag manufacturers had expressed concerns about the impact of the scheme on their business, Ms Miriam LAU considered it necessary that a meeting should be convened to exchange views with the affected trades with a view to allaying their concerns. The Chairman suggested and members agreed to hold a meeting on Monday, 16 July 2007, at 8:30 am to continue discussion on the proposal and to exchange views with the affected trades and the Administration.

45. As a separate issue, Mr Martin LEE opined that the Panel on Environmental Affairs should take the lead in ensuring that the temperature of its meeting venue should be kept at 25.5°C.

VII. Any other business

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.