

ITEM FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 39 – DRAINAGE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Additional cleansing of underground drains and sewers”

HEAD 49 – FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Special improvement in environmental hygiene to combat human swine influenza”

HEAD 63 – HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Environmental hygiene improvement and community involvement projects”

HEAD 95 – LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Strengthening cleansing and disinfection services and promoting human swine influenza precautionary measures in leisure and cultural venues”

HEAD 170 – SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Strengthening cleansing service of welfare service units”

Members are invited to approve the following proposal, representing a total commitment of \$289.8 million, for measures to step up environmental hygiene in the fight against human swine influenza –

For Drainage Services Department (Head 39 Subhead 700)

- (a) a new commitment of \$15.5 million to carry out additional cleansing work to underground drains and sewers in blockage-prone areas and downstream pipelines of hospitals, government clinics and public markets;

/For

**For Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
(Head 49 Subhead 700)**

(b) a new commitment of \$99 million to enhance cleansing and disinfection services in public markets, public toilets, rear lanes and private buildings, and the provision of related publicity and education materials;

For Home Affairs Department (Head 63 Subhead 700)

(c) a new commitment of \$41.2 million to implement environmental hygiene improvement and related community involvement projects;

**For Leisure and Cultural Services Department
(Head 95 Subhead 700)**

(d) a new commitment of \$39.1 million to strengthen cleansing and disinfection services, and to step up environmental hygiene and related precautionary measures as well as public education in leisure and cultural venues; and

For Social Welfare Department (Head 170 Subhead 700)

(e) a new commitment of \$95 million to strengthen general cleansing service and enhance environmental hygiene of welfare service units.

PROBLEM

In the light of the latest developments on the spread of human swine influenza (HSI) in the community, we need to further enhance our efforts on the prevention front.

/PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to provide additional funding of \$289.8 million for the Drainage Services Department (DSD), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to launch a number of initiatives for environmental hygiene improvement lasting for about 12 months. Our aim is to step up environmental hygiene and related public education and publicity work in the fight against HSI –

- (a) improving environmental hygiene and reinforcing the Government's efforts to keep Hong Kong clean;
- (b) strengthening general cleansing services and enhancing environmental hygiene in respect of target groups, including welfare service units and households of the elderly and disadvantaged; and
- (c) enhancing public awareness and community involvement as well as promoting HSI precautionary measures and personal health and hygiene.

JUSTIFICATION

3. Maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene is the first line of prevention against the spread of diseases. In the light of the latest developments on the spread of HSI in the community, it is necessary to step up our preventive efforts to minimise the threat of HSI. Our proposal is elaborated as follows –

(a) *DSD: Additional cleansing of underground drains and sewers*

DSD will carry out additional cleansing work to underground drains and sewers in blockage-prone areas, including rear lanes in congested old urban areas (such as Mong Kok and Wan Chai) as well as the downstream pipelines of hospitals, major government clinics and public markets, so as to minimise the risk of occurrence of unhygienic sewage overflows. DSD will increase the current cleansing rate of about three to four times a year up to about six times a year at these particular locations. The three current term contractors hired by DSD will deploy additional high pressure water jetting units to clean an additional length of about 100 kilometres of drains and sewers. With the additional cleansing, the chance of blockage to these drains and sewers is estimated to be reduced by half. The projected cost of these measures is \$15.5 million in total. The cost breakdown is at Enclosure 1.

(b) ***FEHD: Special improvement in environmental hygiene to combat human swine influenza***

FEHD will enhance cleansing and disinfection services in public markets, public toilets, rear lanes and private buildings, and the provision of related publicity and education materials. The private contractors hired by FEHD will enhance cleansing and disinfection services in public markets; step up street washing services to rear lanes in the vicinity of licensed food premises, hawker concentrated areas and markets; increase the cleansing frequency for aqua privies and public toilets without attendants according to service needs and usage; and provide one-off clean-up services to common areas of private buildings without management bodies^{Note}. To address the problem of environmental hygiene blackspots in different districts, FEHD will engage contractors to step up cleansing and disinfection work at these target locations and to eliminate those hygiene blackspots through special cleansing operations. Of the 105 environmental hygiene blackspots identified in consultation with District Councils, 21 have been cleared and removed from the list thus far. The remaining 84 have been restored to an acceptable hygiene condition. Through this new initiative and with the support of the community, it is expected that they would be properly restored in the year to come. The projected cost of these measures is \$99 million in total. The cost breakdown is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

(c) ***HAD: Environmental hygiene improvement and community involvement projects***

HAD will conduct cleansing work in the community to improve environmental hygiene and enhance community's participation in keeping Hong Kong clean. For example, cleansing work will be conducted for common areas of private buildings without management bodies and for households of the under-privileged (such as singleton elderly).

HAD will also promote community involvement by encouraging the community to uphold personal, home and environmental hygiene through promotional activities. For example, seminars, roving exhibitions and other events on personal/environmental hygiene will be organised and hygiene packets, posters and other promotional

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^{Note} FEHD and HAD will co-ordinate their clean-up services to common areas of private buildings without management bodies, with a view to optimising the use of resources.

materials will be distributed. Volunteer activities will be organised with District Councils and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There will also be territory-wide publicity to raise public awareness.

In implementing the district-based projects, HAD will take into account district circumstances and work closely with the respective District Councils. The projected cost of these measures is \$41.2 million in total. The cost breakdown is at Enclosure 3.

Encl. 3

(d) *LCSD: Strengthening cleansing and disinfection services and promoting human swine influenza precautionary measures in leisure and cultural venues*

In view of the latest developments on the spread of HSI in the local community, LCSD has updated its guidelines to staff and strengthened precautionary measures, including requiring its cleansing contractors to step up cleansing and disinfection work in leisure and cultural venues/facilities. LCSD will further strengthen cleansing and disinfection services in venues with high patronage. It will also employ Health Ambassadors (HAs) at 106 leisure and cultural venues. The HAs will be responsible, inter alia, for assisting and advising venue users to maintain environmental hygiene in venues, monitoring and inspecting the cleansing and disinfection work in venues, facilitating venue users to follow the guidelines on the prevention of HSI issued by LCSD as well as reporting on non-compliance of environmental hygiene requirements in various venues so as to facilitate prompt follow-up actions. The projected cost of this scheme is \$39.1 million in total. The cost breakdown is at Enclosure 4.

Encl. 4

(e) *SWD: Strengthening cleansing service of welfare service units*

SWD will provide additional resources for some 1 800 welfare service units to hire cleansing service or employ part-time or temporary helping hands to strengthen general cleansing service and enhance environmental hygiene as appropriate. Each of the welfare service units will determine the scope and type(s) of environmental hygiene measures to suit their specific requirements. The aim is to increase the capability of welfare service units in the prevention of infections among service users and staff. SWD will require the welfare service units to report how the funds are used under the policy objective of stepping up environmental hygiene in the fight against HSI. The projected cost of the initiative is \$95 million (see Enclosure 5).

Encl. 5

4. Controlling Officers for the relevant Heads of Expenditure may adjust the implementation details in light of changing operational requirements, subject to the proposed commitments being put to best use on stepping up environment hygiene and related promotion work that meet operational needs. Where outsourced contracts are involved, to protect the interest of the workers, relevant government departments will require the contractors to specify in their proposals the wages and working hours of their staff, in accordance with existing guidelines on the engagement and monitoring of government service contracts. Departments concerned will monitor closely contract compliance by contractors and follow up on any complaints, and will also require the contractors to provide adequate protective gears, such as face masks and gloves, to the workers to ensure work safety. NGOs involved in implementing any of the above measures would be encouraged to adopt similar measures when they hire contractors for cleansing services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. To cater for any unforeseen increase in costs, we have included in the estimate for each non-recurrent commitment a contingency sum at about 3% of the projected cost of the relevant initiative. The proposal will require additional funding totalling \$289.8 million, summarised as follows –

| Initiative | Estimated Cost* (\$ million) |
|---|---|
| (a) DSD: Additional cleansing of underground drains and sewers | 15.5 |
| (b) FEHD: Special improvement in environmental hygiene to combat human swine influenza | 99.0 |
| (c) HAD: Environmental hygiene improvement and community involvement projects | 41.2 |
| (d) LCSD: Strengthening cleansing and disinfection services and promoting human swine influenza precautionary measures in leisure and cultural venues | 39.1 |
| (e) SWD: Strengthening cleansing service of welfare service units | 95.0 |
| Total | 289.8 |

* Including about 3% contingency

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6. On 22 June 2009, we consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (the Panel) on the proposal. The Panel requested the Administration to elaborate on the initiatives and provide an estimated number of jobs to be created as a result of these initiatives. The relevant information has been provided to the Panel.

BACKGROUND

7. On 11 June 2009, the World Health Organization raised the level of swine influenza pandemic alert from Phase 5 to Phase 6, signifying that the world was at the start of an influenza pandemic. As at 30 June 2009, 116 countries/areas have officially reported over 71 000 confirmed cases of HSI.

8. Since the initial outbreak of HSI in Mexico earlier this year, all government bureaux and departments in Hong Kong have deployed their existing staff and resources to step up cleansing and disinfection of their offices as well as premises and facilities under their management. The Government has also provided extra resources for 18 districts, schools, etc., and joined hands with District Councils, public utilities, public transport operators, NGOs and various business associations to promote a clean and healthy environment. The Emergency Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic has been activated since the confirmation of the first imported case of HSI on 1 May 2009. Upon the emergence of the first cluster of local HSI cases on 11 June 2009, the "Fight Against Pandemic" campaign is gradually transiting from the containment phase to a new mitigation phase. As at 30 June 2009, there were a total of 785 confirmed cases in Hong Kong.

9. On 26 May 2009, the Financial Secretary announced the earmarking of \$300 million for enhancing measures to fight against the HSI pandemic. Apart from the proposal in this submission, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Marine Department will also be stepping up their efforts in

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Encls.
6 & 7

the area of environmental hygiene at an estimate of \$6 million and \$4.2 million respectively. Details of their proposals are set out at Enclosures 6 and 7. As each of the two non-recurrent commitments is below \$10 million, they will be approved by the Administration under authority delegated by this Committee.

Food and Health Bureau
July 2009

**Estimated Expenditure on
Additional Cleansing of Underground Drains and Sewers
(Drainage Services Department)**

\$ million

Appointing contractors to carry out additional cleansing of
about 100 kilometres of underground drains and sewers

The current cleansing rate of about three to four times a year will be increased up to about six times a year at the following locations –

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Blockage-prone areas, including rear lanes in congested old urban areas (such as Mong Kok and Wan Chai); and | 9.2 |
| • The downstream pipelines of hospitals, major government clinics and public markets. | 6.3 |

Total **15.5**

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Special Improvement in Environmental Hygiene
to Combat Human Swine Influenza
(Food and Environmental Hygiene Department)**

\$ million

Enhancing cleansing and disinfection services in public markets

18.0

- Providing additional cleansing contractor manpower to all districts for carrying out enhanced cleansing and disinfection services by means of high pressure hot water cleaners to common areas (including passageways, toilets, lift lobby, loading area, refuse collection points and vacant stalls, etc.) in all 104 public markets in Hong Kong, and stepping up services in other areas (e.g. hourly disinfection to handrails of escalators and panel boards of lifts, disinfection of toilets after each cleansing operation and disinfection of common areas in markets after the last cleansing operation of the day, etc.)

Enhancing street washing services

12.4

- Providing additional cleansing contractor manpower to all districts to enhance the clean-up of problematic backlanes in the vicinity of food premises, hawker concentrated areas and public markets, using high pressure hot water cleaners.

Enhancing cleansing services for aqua privies and public toilets

8.8

- Providing additional cleansing contractor manpower to enhance the hygiene condition of about 550 aqua privies and public toilets without attendant service; increasing the daily cleansing frequency from one/two times currently to three times daily, and increasing the frequency of weekly deep cleansing from once currently to twice.

One-off clean-up services to common areas of private buildings without management bodies 31.9

- Setting up one to two roving teams in every district to provide one-off clean-up to the common areas (roof, staircase, lightwell and canopy) of all old tenement buildings without Owners' Corporations/Mutual Aid Committees, as well as their adjacent lanes.

Enhancing the clean-up of environmental hygiene blackspots and sustaining the enhanced level of public cleansing services 23.7

- Providing one to two roving teams in every district to enhance the clean-up of hygiene blackspots and eliminate the spots through special cleansing operations.

Publicity and educational programmes on personal, domestic and environmental hygiene 4.2

- Promoting hygiene messages to target groups, including domestic helpers, new immigrants, and ethnic minorities, through organising publicity programmes and distributing publicity materials prepared in their languages; and
- Organising promotional activities on anti-flu and hygiene messages in public markets, including exhibitions, game booths and workshops.

Total 99.0

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Environmental Hygiene Improvement and
Community Involvement Projects
(Home Affairs Department)**

\$ million

Cleansing work in the community

20.6

- Conducting cleansing work in the community to improve environmental hygiene and enhance the community's participation in keeping Hong Kong clean. For example, cleansing work will be conducted for common areas of private buildings without management bodies and for households of the under-privileged (such as singleton elderly).

Promotional activities

20.6

- Promoting community involvement by encouraging the community to uphold personal, home and environmental hygiene through promotional activities. For example, seminars, roving exhibitions and other events on personal/environmental hygiene will be organised and hygiene packets, posters and other promotional materials will be distributed. Volunteer activities will be organised with District Councils and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There will also be territory-wide publicity to raise public awareness.

Total

41.2

Note –

- (i) All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.
- (ii) The types and details of the projects will be worked out taking into account district circumstances and the views of the respective District Councils.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Strengthening Cleansing and Disinfection Services and
Promoting Human Swine Influenza Precautionary Measures
in Leisure and Cultural Venues
(Leisure and Cultural Services Department)**

\$ million

Strengthening cleansing and disinfection services 27.6

- Setting up special cleansing operation teams in 18 districts for enhancing the cleansing frequency to sports, recreational and other associated facilities (including cleansing of children's playground and equipment, elderly fitness equipment, pebble walking trails, garden benches, arbours, chess tables, refuse collection bins, ramps for the person with disabilities; and clearing of drains) in parks and playground venues where the current cleansing services are provided by mobile cleansing teams; and providing additional cleansing contractor services to libraries for carrying out enhanced cleansing and disinfection services (e.g. arranging hourly cleansing and disinfection of keyboard, mouse pad, mouse, Chinese writing device of all On-line Public Access Catalogue terminals, Internet terminals and all computer equipment in Computer Information Centre/Area, etc.).

Promoting human swine influenza precautionary measures in leisure and cultural venues 11.5

- Recruiting Health Ambassadors (HAs) to serve in 106 leisure and cultural venues (including 23 indoor sports centres, 29 major parks / playgrounds / holiday camps / outdoor recreation and sports centres, 34 public libraries, 12 indoor stadia and performing arts venues, and eight public museums) to help step up environmental hygiene and related precautionary measures as well as public education.

Total 39.1

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Strengthening Cleansing Service
of Welfare Service Units
(Social Welfare Department)**

| | \$ million |
|--|-------------------|
| <u>Strengthening cleansing service of welfare service units</u> | 95.0 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing additional resources for some 1 800 welfare service units to hire cleansing service or employ part-time or temporary helping hands to strengthen general cleansing service and enhance environmental hygiene as appropriate. The aim is to increase the capability of welfare service units in the prevention of infections among service users and staff. | |
| Total | 95.0 |

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Additional Cleansing of Country Park Facilities and
Enhancing Hygiene of Government Wholesale Food Markets
(Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department)**

| | \$ million |
|--|-------------------|
| <u>Additional cleansing of country park facilities</u> | 3.1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Upgrading the flushing toilet facilities to provide more automatic cleansing facilities (water taps, soap dispensers, hand dryers and disinfectant dispensers);● Enhancing general cleansing in country park areas by deploying additional cleansing contractor manpower to conduct special clean-up operations in areas of hygiene concern and increase the frequency of cleansing of recreation sites in country parks; and● Providing ten additional mobile toilets at popular recreation sites in country parks. | |
| <u>Enhancing hygiene of government wholesale food markets</u> | 2.9 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Enhancing cleansing and disinfection of toilets of the three government wholesale food markets during peak operation hours in the early mornings;● Enhancing refuses collection by arranging one additional refuse collection for each of the three government wholesale food markets on a daily basis;● Increasing the frequency of general cleansing of market drains, roads and lifts. For example, the drains will be cleaned twice a week instead of once a week; and● Provision of protective clothing and ancillary materials. | |
| Total | 6.0 |

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.

**Estimated Expenditure on
Additional Cleansing Services to Cross-boundary Ferry Terminals, Marine
Refuse Collection Points and Other Concerned Water Areas
(Marine Department)**

| | \$ million |
|--|------------|
| <u>Additional cleansing service to cross-boundary ferry terminals</u> | 1.1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Conducting two thorough cleansing and washing exercises each at the Macau Ferry Terminal (MFT) and China Ferry Terminal (CFT);● Stationing additional cleaners in passenger toilets of MFT and CFT; and● Replacing the recycled rubbish bins at MFT and CFT. | |
| <u>Additional marine refuse collection and cleansing work</u> | 3.1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Setting up an additional special team and acquiring pressurised water spray guns to increase the frequency of scavenging refuse at littoral foreshore areas and effectiveness in cleaning the marine refuse collection points. | |
| Total | 4.2 |

Note –

All expenditure will be incurred in 2009-10 and 2010-11 over a 12-month period.
