

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 217/08-09(06)

Ref: CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 11 November 2008**

Reprovisioning of cremators in public crematoria

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the past discussions by the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (the Panel) on the reprovisioning of cremators in public crematoria.

Background

2. Due to limited land supply for coffin burials, the Government has been encouraging the public to adopt cremation in lieu of coffin burials as the means of disposal of dead bodies since the 1970s. At present, a total of six Government crematoria are open for public use, i.e. Cape Collinson Crematorium, Diamond Hill Crematorium, Fu Shan Crematorium, Kwai Chung Crematorium, Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and Cheung Chau Crematorium. Since 2000, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has committed in its performance pledge to arrange cremation sessions within 15 days of application and has been able to achieve this target so far.

3. To cope with the rising demand for cremation services, all eight cremators at Kwai Chung and Fu Shan Crematoria were replaced by more efficient ones in 2003 and 2004. All cremators at Diamond Hill, Wo Hop Shek and Cape Collinson have been/would be reprovisioned in phases to enhance the handling capacity and to improve control on their air emission, for commissioning between 2006 and 2014. According to the Administration, old standard cremators built before the 2000s normally handle three sessions per day, whereas new standard cremators

built after 2000 can normally handle six sessions.

Past discussions

4. At the meeting on 9 January 2007, members were briefed by the Administration on the progress of reprovisioning cremators in public crematoria as follows -

Diamond Hill

- (a) Due to inclement weather, the target completion date of the reprovisioned of six cremators had been slightly deferred from end-2006 to the second quarter of 2007.

Wo Hop Shek

- (b) In the consultation in early 2006, North District Council (NDC) Members had no in-principle objection to the reprovisioning proposal but requested to be further consulted when more project details were available. The Administration was conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study and working on preliminary design for reprovisioning a total of nine cremators in two phases. NDC would be consulted again in late 2007.

Cape Collinson

- (c) The Administration had consulted the relevant DC in early 2006 on the reprovisioning of the 12 old cremators with nine new ones. Members supported the proposal generally but were concerned about the resultant increase in vehicular flow throughout the year. The Administration subsequently commissioned a consultant to conduct a Traffic Impact Assessment study which concluded that the project would not have significant adverse traffic impact on the area. The Administration had further proposed to build one more new cremator in Phase 2 to reprovision the existing one for the exclusive use of Hindus, and the DC had raised no objection to the proposal. Upon completion of the whole reprovisioning project, there would be a total of 10 new cremators. An EIA study would be conducted in late 2007.

5. Members noted that if the above three projects proceeded smoothly, it was estimated that the total annual cremation capacity of the public cremators would be increased to 54 750 sessions by 2014, and would fully meet the projected

demand of 43 300 sessions. The waiting time for cremation might then be reduced from the current 15 days to 13 days.

6. On the question as to why the waiting time for cremation might only be reduced from the current 15 days to 13 days despite the re-provisioning work, the Administration clarified that 15 days was the longest waiting time. The Administration further pointed out that the time taken for cremation services to be provided depended not only on the availability of cremation sessions, but also the preference of the applicants. For example, the time taken for cremation services to be provided might be longer before and after Lunar New Year, a period which had traditionally been a peak season for cremation, and if the time for conducting cremation was insisted on auspicious dates/weekends.

7. Some members, including Hon WONG Yung-kan, asked whether consideration would be given to constructing crematorium in outlying islands. The Administration responded that it might not be feasible to do so, as ferry companies would have great difficulties in providing adequate ferry service to meet the demand generated by the large number of grave sweepers during Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals. Moreover, many of the areas in outlying islands came within the protected realm of country parks.

Relevant papers

8. Members are invited to access the Legislative Council's website (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>) for details of the papers and minutes of the relevant meeting.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 November 2008