

**Subcommittee on Country Parks (Designation)  
(Consolidation) (Amendment) Order 2010**

**Responses to follow-up actions arising from the discussion  
at the meeting on 29 July 2010**

**Closing the two public car parks near the LOHAS Park**

1. Our inspections of the two public car parks near the LOHAS Park revealed that they provide a total of 50 parking spaces for lorries and 52 parking spaces for private cars free of charge. During our recent inspection on 17 August 2010 morning, we found that a total of five refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) were parked in the concerned car parks and three of them were found loaded, with some refuse left on their hoppers instead of having been compacted into their compartments. Also, refuse debris and traces of leachate were found on the ground near the parked RCVs. As these two car parks are near to the LOHAS Park, the parking of loaded RCVs there may cause some odour nuisance to nearby residents. To avoid such potential nuisance and in response to request from some members of the Subcommittee, we wrote to the Transport Department (TD) on 24 August 2010 requesting them to consider closing these two car parks. The TD replied that they had carried out a site survey at the two car parks and found that the car parks were highly utilized. They therefore consider that there is no traffic justification to close the car parks. However, we will follow up further with TD and other government departments on the potential odour nuisance caused by loaded refuse collection vehicles parked at the above car parks, with a view to exploring feasible ways to minimize the potential nuisance.

2. As regards designating a parking area within the SENT Landfill for overnight parking of private RCVs, we have reviewed the matter from practicality, contractual responsibility and property liability considerations. On practicality consideration, we have reviewed the current site construction work, landfilling operation and progressive restoration of the SENT Landfill, and found no suitable area could be identified for overnight parking of the private RCVs. Also, there is great concern about potential fire hazards associated with some unknown waste assignments/compositions (e.g. flammable waste) carried by RCVs and such risk must not be allowed in a landfill. Contractually, owing to the responsibility imposed on the landfill operator under the SENT Landfill contract, the landfill operator is fully responsible for all risks associated with any activities within the landfill site.

Taking into consideration of the property liability for allowing the parking of private RCVs, apart from practicality consideration, we consider that a landfill site is not an appropriate place for providing overnight parking for private RCVs.

### **Improving waste collection services to avoid leachate drip**

3. According to the information provided by the TD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), there are about 320 private RCVs and 150 government RCVs operating in Hong Kong. <sup>[Note 1]</sup>

4. Our investigation revealed that all the newly purchased government RCVs are equipped with the following devices to prevent spattering of waste and dripping of leachate:

- (a) A metal tailgate cover, powered by a pneumatic system, covering the opening of the hopper at the back of the RCV during waste transportation.
- (b) Wastewater sump tank(s) installed at bottom of RCV to store leachate coming out from the (compacted) refuse, which can be emptied by opening a valve.

5. For private RCVs, few are equipped with the above devices and retrofitting of them is technically challenging. Given that there are many different types/models of private RCVs in Hong Kong, it is not possible to have a standard design for the metal tailgate cover and sump tank that can be installed on all RCVs because of their different shapes, dimensions and sizes, different locations of the compressed air and electronic systems, the presence of obstructions (e.g. rear lights), the availability of space beneath the chassis (for the sump tank), etc. Hence, to make retrofitting possible, those devices would have to be tailor-made for each vehicle and discussion with the trade indicated that the design and retrofitting would cost roughly \$80,000 for the metal tailgate cover and \$10,000 for the sump tank.

6. Our investigation also indicated that addition of a metal tailgate cover

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*[Note 1] By the term “refuse collection vehicle”, we are referring to a specialised vehicle with a refuse compactor body where refuse is loaded from the rear, compacted by a compactor and stored inside. Other vehicles, e.g. open-top lorries, employed for transportation of refuse are not included.*

will require modification of the rear lighting and pneumatic systems whereas addition of sump tank(s) will impose more loading onto the RCV chassis. Depending on the scale of modifications, such modifications may have to be approved by the TD and vehicle examination may also be required. It is noted that private waste collectors, especially those operating one or two RCVs, may not be able to afford the time (up to several weeks) for their RCVs to undertake the modification work and TD's examination etc as they have to fulfill their contractual (waste collection) obligation with their clients at the same time.

7. It should be noted that there are no statutory requirements to mandate retrofitting of the above devices to private RCVs. As explained above, the retrofitting process would idle an RCV for up to several weeks and this could affect the livelihood of small waste collectors. While mandating the retrofitting of the above devices can be explored, we will encourage private waste collectors to include those devices on their newly purchased RCVs. For waste collection contracts outsourced by the FEHD, we have requested FEHD to consider the feasibility to include specific provisions in the outsourced contracts requiring their contractors to provide the above devices in the RCVs under their contracts. We will also encourage property management companies to include similar requirements in their waste collection service contracts. On maintenance and cleanliness of RCVs, we will continue to liaise with the trade through established communication channels and provide vehicle washing at the landfill to ensure that RCVs are properly maintained and kept clean in their operation.

8. For the suggestion to encourage the general public and the users of waste collection services to use thicker rubbish bags and tie the bags properly for disposal of waste, in particular food waste, to avoid dripping of leachate, we would incorporate this message for dissemination to the public in our publicity programme for minimizing the generation of food waste.

### **Enhancing cleanliness of Wan Po Road**

9. To enhance the cleanliness of Wan Po Road, the SENT Landfill contractor has commenced additional flushing and sweeping of Wan Po Road (about six round-trips daily from 8:00 am to mid-night), between the landfill entrance and the Hang Hau round-about, supplementing the street flushing being provided by FEHD (two times daily). In addition, as a measure to minimise nuisance caused by RCVs visiting the landfill, and prior to the commissioning of the full-body vehicle washing facility (design being finalised)

at the landfill, the SENT Landfill contractor has set up an interim facility to provide a (manual) vehicle-body cleaning service to those RCVs. The Administration has also stepped up enforcement action in the Tseung Kwan O area under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance Cap. 132. FEHD would, with sufficient evidence, institute prosecutions against people concerned in case of RCVs dirtying public roads.

### **Ceasing disposal of sludge from sewage treatment works at SENT Landfill**

10. To ensure the stability of the landfill slopes is maintained at a safe level, co-disposal of dewatered sludge from sewage treatment works with municipal solid waste and construction waste at landfills is currently the only practical disposal option. All the three strategic landfills in Hong Kong are required to receive sludge from sewage treatment works, such that the dewatered sludge can be mixed with municipal solid waste and construction waste to a required ratio of 1:10. For the SENT Landfill, to minimise the odour nuisance from the sewage sludge, we have already limited the disposal of sewage sludge as much as we could manage. With close liaison with the Drainage Services Department on their delivery schedule, we have restricted the arrival times of sludge tankers from the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works so as to control the amount of sludge to be disposed at any one time and allow sufficient time for the landfill operator to cover/mix the sludge with other less odourous solid wastes.

11. As a long term waste management measure, EPD is developing a dedicated sludge treatment facility (STF) using modern incineration technology to dispose of the sludge in a more environmental and sustainable manner. The first phase of the STF is scheduled for commissioning in 2013. The environmental impact assessment of the SENT Landfill extension project has also concluded that disposal of sewage sludge would not be allowed in the SENT Landfill extension.

### **Redistributing leftover food to reduce food waste**

12. Currently there are a number of non-government organizations (NGO) operating food banks or programmes that distribute food to the needy people in Hong Kong. Apart from procuring food direct, some NGOs also acquire left-over food from the commercial sectors such as food companies, hotels or markets. An example is the “Save Food Save Earth” food waste recovery programme organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions

Education Fund that collects left-over food and vegetables from the Tai Po market for cooking and distribution to the needy. The Government, through the Social Welfare Department, also provides subsidies to the NGOs to implement the food banks or food distribution programmes to the needy.

13. The EPD has set up the Food Waste Recycling Partnership Scheme with the commercial and industrial (C&I) sectors in end 2009 for the promotion of good food waste management practices. EPD would take this opportunity to explore with the C&I sectors about the possibility of collecting left-over food from them by NGOs for meaningful distribution to the needy as well as reduction in food waste disposal.

### **Potential sites for designation as country park area as compensation for the area excised**

14. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had received referrals from the Legislative Council suggesting several potential sites in the vicinity of the Clear Water Bay Country Park (CWBCP). They are Tai Au Mun, Ng Fai Tin, Sheung Yeung Shan, Tai Wan Tau and Chuk Kok. The AFCD has assessed these sites in accordance with the established principles and criteria for designation of country parks, namely, landscape quality, recreation potential, conservation value, land status, effectiveness of management, etc. The AFCD would recommend to the Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB) that the upper slope above the Tai Au Mun Road of about 15 hectares would be a feasible option for inclusion into the boundary of the CWBCP. The assessments of potential sites as well as the recommended site will be discussed by the CMPB at its meeting of 21 September 2010.

### **Withdrawal of the Amendment Order**

15. We have tabled the Amendment Order after having thorough deliberations and consultations. Any deferral to the introduction of the Amendment Order would be undesirable. In response to Members' enquiry regarding the possibility of withdrawing the Amendment Order and re-introducing it at a later stage, we have sought legal advice on this aspect. As the revised map was approved by the Executive Council (ExCo) under section 13 of the Country Parks Ordinance Cap 208, the Chief Executive who has acted under section 14 of Cap 208 to designate (i.e. by the Amendment Order) the areas in the revised map to be the CWBCP has no power to withdraw the Amendment Order because such withdrawal would not be consistent with the

statutory intention of Cap 208 and the approval made in respect of the revised map by ExCo under section 13 of Cap 208. While the Administration may move a motion in the Legislative Council to seek agreement to amend the commencement date of the Order, such amendment should not cause undue delay to commencing the Order.

**Environmental Protection Department**  
**September 2010**