

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

Responses to submission from a resident of Tseung Kwan O Plaza

This paper sets out our responses to the submission from a resident of Tseung Kwan O Plaza:

Extension of landfills

2. To address our serious and imminent waste problem in a holistic manner, the Government published “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste in Hong Kong (2005-2014)” (the Policy Framework) in December 2005, which sets out a comprehensive waste management strategy for the next decade. Despite our efforts and progress in waste reduction and recovery, there is still unavoidable waste which needs to be disposed of properly. It is clear that relying on landfilling alone for the disposal of untreated municipal solid waste is not a sustainable way of waste treatment. Therefore the Government is now studying the development of Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF) with incineration as the core technology to substantially reduce the volume of unavoidable waste, thus extending the life span of existing landfills and their extensions. The IWMF is expected to be commissioned by mid-2010s. However, as mentioned in the Policy Framework, landfills will still be required as the final repositories for non-recyclable waste, inert waste and waste residues after treatment. In this regard, in order to solve the imminent problem of waste treatment and disposal and to ensure a sufficient landfill capacity to meet our future demand, we need to expand our existing landfills. It should be noted that both IWMF and landfill extensions coupled with waste reduction and recovery programmes form key integral components of Hong Kong’s waste management strategy.

3. We expect that the three existing strategic landfills will be filled up one by one in mid to late 2010s. Because of regional demand as well as limited capacity, the South East New Territories (SENT) Landfill will be exhausted in 2013/14. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) completed the “Extension of Existing Landfills and Identification of Potential New Waste Disposal Sites” strategic study in 2003 which included the feasibility of extending the existing landfills and developing new waste landfills in different areas of Hong Kong. Extending the existing landfills was the recommended option as a feasible short to medium term measure to handle the waste and which would have comparatively low environmental impacts.

Shortening of operation hours of SENT Landfill

4. The three existing landfills in Hong Kong are strategically located. Together with seven refuse transfer stations in various districts, they form a solid waste disposal network which handles the waste generated daily by the community. The SENT Landfill commenced its development in early 1990s and was commissioned in 1994. Its design was to replace the Tseung Kwan O Stages I and II/III Landfills which had been operated for a long period of time. The SENT Landfill mainly handles waste from commercial and industrial sources, construction waste and domestic waste from the urban areas (including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and Sai Kung District), most of which are collected by private waste collectors and disposed of at the landfill. Effective treatment of waste at landfill lies with the cooperation of landfill users. Having an important role among the strategic solid waste disposal facilities in Hong Kong, the operation of the landfill should not only consider the potential environmental impacts, but also the needs of the related trades. When we are discussing with the trade on the suggestion of shortening the operation hours of the landfill, the trade strongly object this suggestion. We will continue to discuss with the trade on investigating the feasibility of shortening of the landfill operation hours.

5. As explained above, temporary closure of the SENT Landfill between June and September every year would upset the waste disposal network and there would be a shortfall in landfill capacity to receive all the waste generated in Hong Kong. With around 1 000 or so refuse collection vehicles travelling an extra distance of hundreds of thousand kilometers to divert the waste originally disposed at the SENT Landfill to the North East New Territories (NENT) Landfill and West New Territories (WENT) Landfill, which are located further away from Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, the territory's environment will be greatly affected.

Setting up of air monitoring station

6. EPD operates a network of 14 air quality monitoring stations for measuring concentrations of major air pollutants in Hong Kong. It consists of 11 general stations for monitoring ambient air quality and three roadside stations for measuring street level air quality. In designing the air quality monitoring network and identifying the locations of the air quality monitoring stations, EPD needs to consider a number of factors, including the spatial distribution of the monitoring network, the coverage in different types of development areas (e.g. urban areas, new towns and rural areas), local population, the distribution of traffic flow and pollution sources as well as the capability in monitoring regional air pollution, topography and meteorology.

7. Geographically, the current air quality monitoring network covers major areas from East to West and from South to North of the territory. Regarding land uses, it also covers different types of development, such as residential areas, mixed residential/commercial areas, mixed residential/commercial/industrial areas, rural areas and busy urban roadside areas. Therefore, the current air quality monitoring network is adequate in providing full range of data covering the lowest to the highest air pollution levels in Hong Kong as well as air quality information in different types of development areas. In general, the current monitoring network is fully capable of providing a true picture of the air quality in Hong Kong. Therefore, we have no plan at present to set up an air quality monitoring station in Tseung Kwan O.

Odour situation in Tseung Kwan O

8. For the odour problem that occurred in several evenings/midnights in June and July as mentioned by Ms Ho, if they were complaint cases, the staff from the regional office of the EPD would conduct individual investigation on each complaint case to try to trace the source of the odour. Moreover, the information showed that at these periods of time, the operation/situation of the SENT Landfill was normal. The possibility of causing odour impact to the surroundings was low. Nevertheless, we will provide follow-up actions, if considered necessary.

Statutory procedures of the extension of SENT Landfill

9. The Country Parks (Designation) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Order 2010 being considered at the Legislative Council and amendments to the draft Tseung Kwan O Outline Zoning Plan being dealt with by the Town Planning Board are made separately in accordance with statutory procedures under the Country Parks Ordinance and the Town Planning Ordinance respectively, so there is no overlap between them. It is believed that Ms Ho's assertion that this practice is a waste of public money and resources is due to misunderstanding.

Environmental Protection Department
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