

(Translation)

**Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee  
Public Hearing on Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 73  
on 14 December 2019**

**Planning, Provision and Management of Public Toilets by  
the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

**Opening Remarks by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene**

Chairman and Members,

I would like to respond to the recommendations of the Audit Commission (Audit) in a focused manner.

2. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is committed to improving the existing public toilet facilities and services as well as planning and providing new public toilets as appropriate to cater for public needs. Some action plans have been commenced in the past two years. We are grateful to Audit for its audit at this juncture and recommendations on the planning, provision and management of public toilets by FEHD. We generally agree with the Audit recommendations, some of which have already been implemented. We are now exploring the implementation of the remaining recommendations as far as practicable.

3. We will enhance the efforts and efficiency of public toilet refurbishment, management and maintenance in a more strategic and comprehensive way by leveraging on the additional resources obtained, making good use of technology and stepping up collaboration with the relevant departments:

- (a) Resource-wise, apart from the dedicated funding of \$600 million for taking forward the refurbishment programme involving some 240 public toilets in the coming five years, there will be strengthened manpower to go with it. If the results are satisfactory, we will bid for additional resources to expedite the refurbishment of remaining public toilets in due course;

- (b) With the infrared sensor counting data available at the end of 2019, FEHD can measure the utilisation rates of public toilets in a more scientific way. This will facilitate the review of cleansing frequency and planning of maintenance of toilet facilities and refurbishment of public toilets to achieve optimum use of resources. We will also introduce other new technologies to improve the hygiene condition of public toilets;
- (c) We will also step up collaboration with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to improve the design of public toilets, enhance refurbishment/facelifting works, and strengthen the repair and maintenance of facilities.

#### Planning and Provision of Public Toilets

4. For the male-to-female toilet compartment ratio, all the 24 public toilets newly built or reprovisioned in the past five years met the 1:2 male-to-female toilet compartment ratio, which is stated in FEHD's Handbook on Standard Features for Public Toilets. For those existing public toilets which are yet to meet the ratio, the crux of the problem lies on space constraints. We will alleviate the problem through comprehensive refurbishment programme as far as practicable. We will further review the guidelines on the provision of sanitary fitments, taking into account up-to-date data on the usage patterns of compartments and urinals, and male and female users of public toilets.

5. As far as the lead time for refurbishment of public toilets is concerned, FEHD is rolling out in collaboration with ArchSD 42 projects, including 20 refurbishment projects and 22 facelifting projects in 2019-20. From 2019-20 onwards, the timeline for taking forward a refurbishment project can generally be expedited from 4 to 5 years to 2 to 3 years approximately, and the time required to complete a facelifting project is 1 to 1.5 years, depending on its complexity. If individual project requires longer time to complete due to special circumstances or individual factors, we will solve the problems in collaboration with relevant government departments on a best endeavour basis.

6. On the planning and reprovisioning of public toilets, FEHD will continue to review and evaluate the relevant guidelines and criteria.

In reviewing the adequacy of public toilets at tourist spots, FEHD will consult the Tourism Commission with a view to serving the needs of tourists as far as practicable.

7. On planning for refurbishment of public toilets, FEHD will collaborate with ArchSD to work out a priority list of public toilets for refurbishment or facelifting, having regard to their utilisation rate, services/maintenance condition and location, as well as the time lapsed since they were last refurbished. FEHD is drawing up plans for refurbishment of public toilets with high usage which have not been refurbished for a long time.

8. For better management of public toilets, FEHD has stepped up inspection of target public toilets which have a very high utilisation rate and those which are located at tourist spots since July 2018. Monthly inspection reports are submitted to the management. On top of routine cleansing services, dedicated deep cleansing teams have been set up in districts since March 2019 to enhance deep cleansing services for public toilets with high utilisation rate on a regular basis. Since mid-2019, such deep cleansing teams have been progressively extending to all public toilets over the territory upon renewal of street cleansing services contracts.

9. FEHD has devised measures, according to the Audit recommendation, to step up monitoring of the inspection records of public toilets by inspection officers and remind all district staff to properly record their inspection results in accordance with the relevant guidelines. The revamped electronic Contract Management System (CMS) was fully implemented in November 2019 to ensure that inspection officers input correct inspection information. There is also a new function of reporting public toilet management information to provide management staff with summary reports on cleanliness as well as repair and maintenance conditions of minor facilities of outsourced public toilets, so as to facilitate monitoring of the effectiveness of management work.

10. Moreover, FEHD has developed a mobile application (mobile app) in collaboration with ArchSD and EMSD to facilitate its frontline supervising officers in reporting defective items in terms of accuracy and timeliness, enhance the effectiveness of reporting defects, track the progress of maintenance works and collate management data for further analysis. The trial

application of the mobile app has been rolled out by phases in individual districts from November 2019.

11. FEHD is committed to making optimum use of new technology, providing better facilities and improving the hygiene conditions in public toilets. For example, Atomised Ozonated Water Technology, Nano Bubble Technology, Nano Plasma Driven Catalyst Air Purification Technology, Nano Confined Catalytic Oxidation Technology and Microalgae Technology have been put on trial to improve air quality. We will continue to explore the application of new facilities and new technologies to enhance services in toilets. In parallel, to relieve the wet floor situation of public toilets, FEHD has put on trial one stop provision of wash hand basin, soap dispenser and hand dryer in the form of a Cabinet Wash Hand Basin System to alleviate the wet floor problem caused by water dripping by toilet users.

12. In providing toilet attendant services in public toilets, FEHD will examine the demand for toilet attendants in public toilets, having regard to their utilisation rate. In order to improve the working environment of toilet attendants, FEHD will continue to discuss with ArchSD and, if circumstances permit, make available attendant rooms for public toilets provided with toilet attendant services, and install other relevant facilities, such as power sockets, lockers, ventilation, lighting, oscillating fans, exhaust fans, etc.

#### Enhancing Public Education

13. In addition to enhancing the facilities and management of public toilets, FEHD will endeavour to upkeep the cleanliness of public toilets and step up cleansing services, while the public should be civic-minded when using public toilets and should properly use the facilities to avoid causing damage of facilities and making them dirty. FEHD will continue to strengthen its efforts in public education.

14. Chairman and Members, we will continue to follow up proactively on other recommendations in the Audit Report. We welcome Members' views and will actively facilitate the work of the Public Accounts Committee. Thank you, Chairman.