



香港特別行政區政府 The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

渠務署 **Drainage Services Department**

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2 June 2021

(Urgent by email: wyjan@legco.gov.hk)

Public Accounts Committee
 Legislative Council Complex
 1 Legislative Council Road,
 Central, Hong Kong
 (Attn.: Ms. Wendy JAN)

Dear Ms. JAN,

Public Accounts Committee

Consideration of Chapter 7 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 76

Upgrading and operation of Pillar Point Sewage Treatment Works

Thanks for your letter dated 1 June 2021 regarding the captioned.

I attach the Appendix stating our response (in Chinese and English) for your attention please.

Yours sincerely

(LEUNG Wing-yuen)
 for Director of Drainage Services

Encl.

c.c. Secretary for the Environment (email: sen@enb.gov.hk)
 Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (email: sfst@fstb.gov.hk)
 Director of Audit (email: john_nc_chu@aud.gov.hk)

Director of Audit's Report No. 76 – Chapter 7

" Upgrading and Operation of Pillar Point Sewage Treatment Works"

DSD's Response to Enquiries (2 June)

Part 2: Upgrading works of Pillar Point Sewage Treatment Works

- 1) According to DSD's response to Q2, the peeling off issue of the polyurea-based protective coating material might be related to the fact that apart from receiving sewage from the sewerage system in Tuen Mun area, the Pillar Point Sewage Treatment Works also receives septic waste delivered to the plant by tankers, which makes the sewage characteristic different from other sewage treatment plants. Please advise whether the Department, Consultant and Contractor were aware of the need of treating sewage with different characteristic? If yes, why relevant requirements and testing were not specified during design stage?

DSD's Response :

The project team had taken samples of the types of sewage and septic waste to be treated for testing before contract preparation, and had specified the sewage characteristics in the Contract as one of the design parameters for the Contractor to take into consideration at the design stage. Based on past experience and research results, polyurea-based coating is effective in protecting concrete structure from biogenic sulfuric acid attack, and has been performing satisfactory in the Department's other sewage treatment facilities. Following the occurrence of peeling off of protective coating material in Pillar Point Sewage Treatment Works, initial investigation was conducted by the project team. It was perceived that the issues might have been caused by some uncommon foreign substance in the sewage. The Department commissioned a local university to conduct an investigation on the cause of the deterioration as well as reviewing the condition and performance of the replacement coating. The study is expected to be completed in November this year.

- 2) According to DSD's response to Q4, if Contractor A could not complete the defects rectification within the time required under the contract, the Department would defer the release of retention money. If the Contractor A had been urged but was still unable to complete the defects rectification within reasonable time, the Department could appoint

***Note by Clerk, PAC:** *See Appendix 18 to this Report for the reply from Director of Drainage Services.*

other contractors to complete the remaining works at Contractor A's expenses. Please advise whether the Department had exercised such power? If yes, please elaborate with details.

DSD's Response :

The project team had been monitoring the progress of defects rectification works, during which, Contractor A had been urged to deploy adequate resources to expedite the progress.

Since

then, there was improvement on the progress of defects rectification works. As far as the late completion of the defects rectification was concerned, apart from duly recording and reflection of the Contractor's performance in the quarterly performance reports, the Department had also withheld the release of retention money due to such delay in accordance with the Contract until the completion of all defects rectification works. The retention money could safeguard the Department to offset the cost of appointing other contractors to complete the remaining defects rectification works.

Considering that close coordination and special arrangements of the operation of the sewage treatment works would be required to cope with the defects rectification works in order to minimize the disturbance to the sewage treatment service, the project team was of the view that allowing Contractor A to continue completing all the defects rectification works by November 2015 (i.e. 6 months after the time limit as stipulated in the Contract) would be more preferable than appointing other contractors to complete the remaining defects rectification works. As a result, the Department had not exercised the relevant power to appoint other contractors to complete the remaining works.