

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 2349/11-12
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 28 May 2012, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon CHAN Hak-kan (Chairman)
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, JP
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH

Members absent : Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Hon Tanya CHAN

Public officers attending : **For item IV**

Dr Kitty POON
Under Secretary for the Environment

Ms Amy YUEN
Assistant Director (Water Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Alex NG
Principal Environmental Protection Officer
(Sewerage Infrastructure)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr CHENG Hung-leung
Acting Assistant Director (Projects & Development)
Drainage Services Department

Mr IP Wing-cheung
Chief Engineer (Project Management)
Drainage Services Department

Mr LAI Cheuk-ho
Chief Engineer (Sewerage Projects)
Drainage Services Department

For item V

Dr Kitty POON
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr Andrew LAI
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3)

Mr MOK Wai-chuen
Assistant Director (Air Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Henry CHIN
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Mobile
Source) 4
Environmental Protection Department

For item VI

Dr Kitty POON
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr Andrew LAI
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3)

Mr MOK Wai-chuen
Assistant Director (Air Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr PANG Sik-wing
Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Air
Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr SO Ping-chi
Assistant Director / Shipping
Marine Department

Mr Chan Hon-bun
Senior Marine Officer / Licensing and Port
Formalities
Marine Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Becky YU
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

Action

- I. Confirmation of minutes**
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1992/11-12 — Minutes of the meeting held
on 23 April 2012)

The minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2012 were confirmed

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that the following information paper had been issued
since last meeting -

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1792/11-12 — Administration's paper on
Sewage Services Operating
Accounts Actual Outturn in
2010-2011 and Projected
Outturn in 2011-2012)

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1949/11-12(01) — List of follow-up actions
LC Paper No. CB(1) 1949/11-12(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. The Chairman advised that the Administration had proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 25 June 2012, at 2:30 pm -

- (a) District Cooling System at the Kai Tak Development; and
(b) Review of the "Second Technical Memorandum for Allocation of Emission Allowances in Respect of Specified Licences".

Mr KAM Nai-wai suggested including an item on "Progress of the Building Energy Efficiency Funding Schemes" in the agenda for the next meeting. The Under Secretary for the Environment (USEN) said that as a large number of applications had been received under the Schemes, the Administration would require more time to collate these applications before reporting the outcome of the Schemes to the Panel. Mr KAM said that he would raise a question on the issue at a forthcoming Council meeting. Meanwhile, the Administration should endeavour to update the Panel on the latest position of the Schemes as soon as practicable.

4. Ms Cyd HO enquired about the timing for discussion on "External lighting in Hong Kong" which was originally scheduled for discussion in June 2012. USEN said that the working group set up to formulate the draft guidelines on Industry Best Practices for External Lighting Installations was still gauging views from stakeholders, which was not an easy task given the prevalence of commercial-cum-residential areas in Hong Kong with high building density and intermingling of shops, entertainment venues and residential buildings. The Administration was still awaiting recommendations from the working group.

IV. 274DS – Yuen Long and Kam Tin sewerage, stage 3 and 332DS – Lam Tsuen Valley sewerage, stage 2

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1949/11-12(03) — Administration's paper on 274DS – Yuen Long and Kam Tin sewerage, stage 3 and 332DS – Lam Tsuen Valley sewerage, stage 2)

5. The Acting Assistant Director Drainage Services (Projects & Development) (Atg ADDS(P&D)) gave a power-point presentation on the

proposals to upgrade **274DS** "Yuen Long and Kam Tin sewerage, stage 3" and **332DS** "Lam Tsuen Valley sewerage, stage 2" to Category A.

(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation materials was circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 2063/11-12(01) on 30 May 2012.)

274DS – Yuen Long and Kam Tin sewerage, stage 3

6. While supporting the sewerage project to provide for the collection and treatment of sewage from the areas concerned, Professor Patrick LAU was concerned about the difficulty incurred from connection to the public sewerage network given the little space in between village houses. The Chief Engineer (Sewerage Projects) (CE(SP)) said that the alignment of sewers would be worked out in consultation with the village house owners and village representatives. While the limited space in between village houses should be sufficient for the laying of sewers and connection works in this project, there might be cases where the alignment of sewers would have to be worked out in coordination with other owners before connection could be carried out if a village house was surrounded by other houses. USEN supplemented that cooperation from owners and village representatives would be sought in resolving the connection problems. It was worth noting that the connection rate for villages in some areas was in fact quite high. For instance, the connection rate for Shatin was close to 100%.

332DS – Lam Tsuen Valley sewerage, stage 2.

7. Noting that some of the proposed sewers at Lam Tsuen Valley would be located in the vicinity of village houses situated near to graded buildings or sites of archaeological interest, Professor Patrick LAU enquired about the heritage implications of the sewerage project. Atg ADDS(P&D) said that adequate mitigation measures would be implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the Preliminary Environmental Review to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the graded buildings and sites of archaeological interest. CE(PM)DSD added that the Antiquities and Monuments Office had been consulted on the heritage implications of the sewerage projects at Lam Tsuen Valley. As a result, the tenders for the sewerage projects had included requirements for care to be taken to avoid adverse impact on the historic buildings, including the various Tsz Tong sites near the construction sites.

8. Mr WONG Yung-kan declared that he was living in Lam Tsuen where many sewerage works were underway. He said that Members belonging to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong were supportive of the proposed sewerage projects. However, he shared the concern about the difficulty incurred from connection works and considered that efforts

should be stepped up to encourage owners to carry out the connection works to ensure timely completion. Atg ADDS(P&D) said that there had been close liaison with the villagers on the sewerage alignments and there would be discussions in the construction stage with owners of village houses in respect of the locations of future sewerage connection points. Assistance would be provided where necessary to facilitate the works and to minimize the inconvenience to residents.

9. In concluding, the Chairman said that members did not raise objection to the proposals, and the submission of **274DS** and **332DS** to the Public Works Subcommittee in June 2012.

V. Trial of electric buses by franchised bus companies

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1949/11-12(04) — Administration's paper on trial of electric buses by franchised bus companies)

10. USEN briefed members on the background to the proposal for funding the five franchised bus companies to purchase a total of 36 electric buses and related charging facilities for trial in Hong Kong. The Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Air Policy) (ADEP(AP)) explained the details of the proposal by highlighting the salient points in the Administration's paper.

11. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired about the choice of bus routes for the trial of electric buses. USEN said that the proposed trial aimed to ascertain the readiness of electric buses to take up the role of conventional diesel buses in Hong Kong in terms of technical suitability, operational feasibility and financial affordability. ADEP(AP) added that franchised bus companies were required to operate the electric buses along routes covering different operating characteristics so as to fully assess their capabilities. The bus routes in trial would include highways and connections within urban areas and new towns (with frequent starts and stops), and those covered different road gradients, route lengths, and passenger loadings as far as possible.

12. In reply to Mr CHAN Kin-por's concern about the safety of electric buses and other vehicles on the roads if the former ran out of electricity before reaching the charging stations, USEN said that all vehicles were subject to safety and risk assessment by the Transport Department (TD) before they were allowed to be used on the roads. ADEP(AP) added that vehicles, including electric buses, had to abide by international safety standards to ensure roadworthiness. In the event that supercapacitor buses ran out of electricity before reaching the charging stations, maintenance vehicles equipped with emergency charging facilities would be used to re-charge the electric buses.

13. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that he was not opposed to the proposal, but was concerned about the implications of the trial on bus fares. USEN said that while the franchised bus companies would be responsible for the recurrent cost arising from operating the electric buses and the related charging facilities, the Administration would fund the full cost of procurement of these buses. Given that the number of electric buses involved was small compared with the overall fleet size of the franchised buses, the trial was not expected to have any implication on bus fares. Besides, there was an established mechanism on fare adjustment in the bus franchises signed between the Administration and the franchised bus companies.

14. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired about the means through which the operational efficiency and performance of electric buses under local conditions could be assessed. USEN said that a task force comprising representatives from the franchised bus companies and government departments (including the Environmental Protection Department and TD) would be set up to monitor the trial which would last for two years. ADEP(AP) supplemented that a mid-term review would be carried out one year after the commencement of the trial to provide a preliminary assessment of the performance of electric buses. The franchised bus companies would be required to continue to deploy the electric buses for providing franchised bus service until the end of their economical service life.

15. In response to Mr KAM Nai-wai's further enquiry on whether franchised bus companies would be required to use electric buses on a wider scale after the trial, USEN confirmed that the Administration would encourage franchised bus companies to use more electric buses as far as practicable if the test results were satisfactory. In this regard, additional requirements had already been included in the three bus franchises newly granted in April 2012 so that the bus companies concerned had to acquire the most environment-friendly buses that were technologically proven and commercially available when acquiring new buses in future, taking into account affordability of the companies and passengers. The ultimate policy objective of the Administration was to have zero emission buses running across the territory. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3) (DDEP(3)) added that franchised bus companies would acquire more environment-friendly buses in future as all imported vehicles would have to meet Euro V emission standards starting from 1 June 2012. At members' request, the Administration would provide supplementary information on the replacement programme for franchised buses.

Admin

16. The Chairman was concerned that the funding for the purchase of electric buses would be wasted if franchised bus companies were not required to use or replace their bus fleets with electric buses if the test results were satisfactory. He also enquired about other measures to encourage the use of more environment-friendly buses by franchised bus companies, apart from funding for

the purchase of electric buses. Expressing similar concerns, Mr KAM Nai-wai asked if there was any guarantee that franchised bus companies would use electric buses if these were found to be technically suitable for use in Hong Kong. Given that the new bus franchises only required franchised bus companies to acquire the most environment-friendly buses taking into account the affordability of the bus companies and passengers, Ms Cyd HO was concerned that franchised bus companies would not use electric buses.

Admin

17. In reply, USEN said that the trial would help franchised bus companies gathered first-hand experience and knowledge for the possible wider application of electric buses in their bus fleets. The requirements in the new bus franchises for franchised bus companies to acquire the most environment-friendly buses aimed to encourage the wider use of electric buses and other environment-friendly buses with a view to achieving zero emission. It was also worth noting that the inclusion of a specific requirement on the use of electric buses in the new bus franchises might preclude the use of other more environment-friendly buses which might evolve as a result of technological advancement. At members' request, the Administration agreed to provide supplementary information on the requirements on replacement of buses with the most environment-friendly models in the three bus franchises newly granted in April 2012 before the proposal was submitted for consideration by the Finance Committee (FC).

18. As many cities had been using electric buses, Ms Cyd HO opined that there might not be a need to proceed with the trial, particularly when it could only be implemented in 2014 the earliest. Consideration should be given to imposing emission caps in the bus franchise to ensure that franchised bus companies would replace their buses with the most environment-friendly models. USEN said that while this suggestion could be discussed, continued efforts would be made to tighten the emission standards of new buses, which have been proved as an effective measure. .

19. Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed support for the proposal. Noting that the Development Bureau (DEVB) had put forward a proposal on the development of a mono-rail system in Kowloon East, he enquired if DEVB was aware of the trial on electric buses beforehand. USEN said that there were various modes of environment-friendly transport which differed in terms of procurement cost, applicability, service standards, and environmental benefits. The purpose of the proposed trial on electric buses was meant to assess the technical feasibility of this type of green transport on a wider scale. Mr LEE however pointed out that it was the responsibility of the Environment Bureau to assess and advise on the modes of green transport which were most suitable for the Hong Kong situation. USEN said that information generated from different trials would shed light on the technical suitability of different modes of green transport.

Admin

20. To facilitate better understanding, Mr KAM Nai-wai asked if the Administration could provide the agreement to be signed with franchised bus companies on the trial of electric buses. USEN said that the agreement had yet to be formulated pending the funding approval from FC. She nevertheless agreed to provide the proposed key terms to be included in the agreement on the trial of electric buses.

21. In concluding, the Chairman said that members did not raise objection to the submission of the proposal to FC.

VI. Incentive scheme for ocean going vessels to switch fuel at berth

(LC Paper No. CB(1)
1949/11-12(05)

— Administration's paper on
incentive scheme for ocean
going vessels to switch fuel
at berth)

22. USEN briefed members on the implementation framework of an incentive scheme to encourage ocean going vessels (OGVs) to switch to cleaner fuels while at berth in Hong Kong waters.

Scope and eligibility

23. Mr WONG Yung-kan opined that apart from OGVs not plying exclusively within the river-trade limits, the incentive scheme should also apply to river-trade vessels plying between Hong Kong neighbouring cities within the Pearl River Delta (PRD) waters as pollution had no boundaries. There should be more cooperation with the Mainland ports in reducing the emissions from vessels plying within PRD waters. His views were shared by Mr KAM Nai-wai. USEN said that there were initial talks among governments of Guangdong, Shenzhen and Macao on the requirement for OGVs to switch to low-sulphur fuel while at berth in Hong Kong and PRD waters. The Panel would be informed of the outcome of discussion in due course. DDEP(3) added that domestic vessels had been using low sulphur diesel with sulphur content not more than 0.5% which was much cleaner than that used by OGVs. A trial of powering non-kaito local ferries with ultra low sulphur diesel had been carried out.

Registration and declaration

24. While supporting the proposal to reduce emissions from OGVs berthing in Hong Kong, Mr CHAN Kin-por enquired how the Administration could ensure compliance with the incentive scheme which would only rely on self-discipline of shipmasters, and whether spot checks would be carried out. Instead of requiring OGVs to register under the scheme, consideration should be

given to requiring OGVs to apply for exemption each time they entered Hong Kong, or increasing the facilities and light dues if they did not switch to cleaner fuels while at berth. USEN said that the incentive scheme to reduce port facilities and light dues charged on OGVs using low sulphur fuel by 35% to 50% would be a greater incentive for OGVs. The Administration would assess the effectiveness of the incentive scheme upon its expiry in three years' time. ADEP(AP) further explained that if a registered vessel had switched fuel while at berth in Hong Kong waters, the shipmaster could apply for dues incentive under the scheme by submitting an application via Marine Department's counter service or Electronic Business System before leaving Hong Kong waters. The declaration must be made for individual port calls. The use of self-declaration and application form would be in line with international practices in administering similar incentive schemes. Investigation would be carried out if there were suspected non-compliance with the scheme.

25. Ms Cyd HO indicated support for the early implementation of the incentive scheme. Apart from incentives to encourage the fuel switch, disincentives should also be put in place to discourage the use of polluting fuels. To facilitate compliance with the fuel switch, better berthing spaces for OGVs should be provided, particularly at the new Cruise Terminal. Her views were shared by Mr WONG Yung-kan. Mr KAM Nai-wai also enquired if on-shore electricity supply would be provided to allow OGVs to switch to electricity while berthing in Hong Kong waters, including at the new Cruise Terminal. AD(AP) said that space for installing on-shore electricity supply had been provided at the new Cruise Terminal. The international community was now working on a set of common standards for supply of on-shore electricity. Once the common standards had been agreed, the Administration would take steps to provide on-shore electricity supply at the new Cruise Terminal.

Mandating the switch to cleaner fuels while at berth in Hong Kong waters

26. Mr KAM Nai-wai noted that some coastal cities had introduced legislation to mandate the switch to cleaner fuels by OGVs while at berth. He failed to understand why the Administration should still rely on voluntary measures, including the Fair Winds Charter and the proposed incentive scheme, to encourage the switch despite the extent of emissions of OGVs at berth in Hong Kong. He enquired about the number of OGVs which would choose not to berth at Hong Kong if mandatory requirement on fuel switch was imposed, and whether Singapore and Canada had imposed similar mandatory requirement on fuel switch at berth. DDEP(3) said that different countries had adopted different arrangements on fuel switch at berth. For instance, mandatory requirement on fuel switch at berth was adopted by the European Union countries while voluntary arrangements (such as incentive scheme) by Singapore and Vancouver. In the case of Hong Kong, the voluntary Fair Winds Charter was launched by shipliners in January 2011 to encourage OGVs to switch to low

sulphur fuel as far as possible while at berth in Hong Kong waters for two years. Of the 32 500 OGVs calls to Hong Kong in 2011, about 10% had switched to cleaner fuels while at berth in Hong Kong waters. To encourage more OGV operators to switch to cleaner fuels, the Financial Secretary proposed in his 2012-2013 Budget Speech to reduce by half the port facilities and light dues charged on OGVs using low sulphur fuel when at berth in Hong Kong waters. Participating vessels must use low sulphur diesel with sulphur content not more than 0.5% while at berth in Hong Kong waters for their auxiliary engines, generators and boilers.

27. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired if the Administration would consider introducing legislation to mandate OGVs to switch to cleaner fuels while at berth in Hong Kong waters and if so, the legislative timetable. USEN said that Hong Kong's competitiveness as a shipping port could be undermined if the mandatory fuel switch at berth was only implemented in Hong Kong. A regional approach (including the switch to cleaner fuel at berth, and setting up of an Emission Control Area in PRD waters) should be adopted to ensure a level playing field to all OGVs in the drive to tackle the prevailing regional air pollution problem and maximize the environmental benefits. The Administration was liaising with the authorities of Guangdong, Shenzhen and Macao on the proposed initiatives to reduce marine emissions within the PRD waters as set out in the 2011 Policy Address. As a start, Hong Kong would implement the incentive scheme to encourage OGVs to switch to cleaner fuels while at berth in Hong Kong waters.

VII. Any other business

28. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:15 pm.