

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)2025/13-14  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA/1

**Panel on Environmental Affairs**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 26 May 2014, at 2:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Chairman)  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai  
Hon Charles Peter MOK  
Hon CHAN Han-pan  
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok  
Hon Dennis KWOK  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen
- Members absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Kenneth LEUNG

**Public Officers  
attending** : **For item IV**

Ms Christine LOH, JP  
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr Samson LAI  
Assistant Director (Waste Management Policy)  
Environmental Protection Department

**For item V**

Ms Christine LOH, JP  
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr TANG Kin-fai, JP  
Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Maurice YEUNG  
Principal Environmental Protection Officer  
(Assessment and Noise)  
Environmental Protection Department

Mr BOK Kwok-ming  
Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (2)  
Highways Department

**For item VI**

Ms Christine LOH, JP  
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr TSE Chin-wan, JP  
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1)  
Environmental Protection Department

Dr Samuel CHUI  
Principal Environmental Protection Officer  
(Community Relations)  
Environmental Protection Department

**Clerk in attendance :** Ms Miranda HON  
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

**Staff in attendance :** Miss Lilian MOK  
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Ms Mandy LI  
Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON  
Legislative Assistant (1)1

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1464/13-14 — Minutes of the meeting held on  
24 February 2014

LC Paper No. CB(1)1426/13-14 — Minutes of the special meeting  
held on 28 March 2014)

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 February and 28 March 2014  
were confirmed.

**II. Information papers issued since last meeting**

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

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1448/13-14(01) — Letter dated 15 May 2014  
from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN  
Ka-lok to the Secretary for  
the Environment asking for  
information on illegal ivory  
trade in Hong Kong (Chinese  
version only))

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**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 23 June 2014, at 2:30 pm –

- (a) Restored Landfill Revitalisation Funding Scheme; and
- (b) Strengthening the emission control of petrol and liquefied petroleum gas vehicles and increasing the fee of vehicle emission testing.

4. The Chairman proposed and members agreed that the Panel would hold the following two special meetings respectively on –

- (a) Wednesday, 25 June 2014, at 8:30 am to discuss the "Impact of construction works on important species, marine ecology and the fisheries industry"; and
- (b) Thursday, 17 July 2014, at 2:30 pm to discuss the "Measures to promote the recycling industry and establishment of the Recycling Fund".

**IV. Waste Disposal (Amendment) Ordinance 2013 (Commencement) Notice**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(03) — Administration's paper on "Waste Disposal (Amendment) Ordinance 2013 (Commencement) Notice"

LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(04) — Background brief on "Waste Disposal (Amendment) Ordinance 2013 (Commencement) Notice" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

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5. The Under Secretary for the Environment ("USEN") briefed members on the legislative timetable for the Waste Disposal (Amendment) Ordinance 2013 (Commencement) Notice ("the Commencement Notice") which sought to bring the Waste Disposal (Amendment) Ordinance 2013 ("the Amendment Ordinance") into operation. She said that the Amendment Ordinance was enacted by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") on 18 December 2013 to amend the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) for enhancing the control of the depositing of construction waste on private land. The Administration planned to publish the Commencement Notice in the Gazette on 6 June 2014 to appoint 14 July and 4 August 2014 as the commencement dates of respective provisions in the Amendment Ordinance, and the Commencement Notice would then be tabled at LegCo on 11 June 2014 for negative vetting.

6. The Chairman advised that the above legislative timetable was proposed on the basis of no extension of the 28-day negative vetting period. In case there was a need to extend the initial 28-day negative vetting period by 9 July 2014 under the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1), the extended vetting period would expire on the first LegCo meeting of the 2014-2015 session and the proposed commencement dates would be deferred.

7. Members noted the Administration's proposal and did not raise any enquiry on the legislative timetable or the Commencement Notice.

**V. PWP Item No. 810TH – Retrofitting of noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section)**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(05) — Administration's paper on "PWP Item No. 810TH – Retrofitting of noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section)")

8. USEN briefed members on the proposal to upgrade Project 810TH to Category A at an estimated cost of \$623.3 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices for retrofitting of noise barriers on the section of Tuen Mun Road between Rose Dale Garden and Lakeshore Building.

Reduction in traffic noise levels

9. Noting that there were a total of about 1 900 dwellings in the neighbourhood of the project which were exposed to traffic noise level exceeding 70 dB(A) and the project would benefit about 1 800 dwellings with reduction in traffic noise levels of about 1 to 25 dB(A), Mr Steven HO

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expressed concern that some of the dwellings would only have their noise levels reduced by 1 dB(A) upon completion of the project. Mr Tony TSE shared Mr HO's concerns that the reduction in traffic noise levels was insignificant and about 100 dwellings could not benefit from the project, casting doubt on the cost-effectiveness of the project.

10. The Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Assessment and Noise) ("PEPO(A&N)") advised that to mitigate the noise impacts of existing roads, the Administration would implement direct engineering solutions, for example, by retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures on such roads to protect nearby noise sensitive receivers from traffic noise. Regarding Project 810TH, the proposed works would benefit about 1 800 dwellings with reduction in traffic noise levels of about 1 to 25 dB(A), amongst which 1 300 dwellings would have noise levels lowered to below 70 dB(A). Only less than 10% of the 1 800 dwellings would have a reduction in traffic noise level of about 1 dB(A). The Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Environmental Assessment) ("ADEP(EA)") supplemented that many dwellings near the Town Centre Section of Tuen Mun Road were exposed to traffic noise level exceeding 80 dB(A), reaching the maximum level of 86 dB(A). With the proposed noise barriers and enclosures, the traffic noise of this road section would be reduced.

Admin 11. PEPO(A&N) further explained that since some of the dwellings along Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section) were affected by traffic noise from Tuen Mun Road as well as other roads, for example, for Rose Dale Garden and Lakeshore Building, the traffic noise levels that these dwellings were exposed to would not be greatly reduced even after the provision of noise barriers and noise semi-enclosures on the Town Centre Section of Tuen Mun Road. Similarly, while the traffic noise levels at Kam Hing Building and Tung Wai Court would be considerably reduced by more than 10 dB(A), Affluence Garden would not have a significant reduction in noise level as it was affected by different existing noisy roads. As requested by members, USEN undertook to provide a breakdown of the number of dwellings sorted by the respective levels of reduction in traffic noise upon completion of the project.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1564/13-14(01) on 5 June 2014.)*

12. Mr Tony TSE sought elaboration on the design of the proposed full noise enclosure under Project 810TH. With the aid of slide presentation, the Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (2) ("DPM/MW(2)"), Highways Department ("HyD"), advised that similar to the one constructed in the Tuen Mun Road Town Centre, an approximate 130 metres in length with 7 metres to 12 metres in height of full noise enclosure spanning both the northbound and southbound carriageways between the existing San Hui Footbridge and the car park on

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Tsing Yin Street would be built under Project 810TH.

Control on road traffic noise

13. Ms Claudia MO enquired about the measures that the Administration would implement to mitigate the traffic noise impact of the West Kowloon Corridor which was technically not feasible to be retrofitted with noise barriers or enclosures due to its structural limitations.

14. ADEP(EA) responded that the Administration's policy to address the impacts of existing roads with noise level exceeding 70 dB(A) had two strands, which were to retrofit barriers on existing roads and resurface existing roads with low noise materials. Apart from the traffic noise level, technical feasibility was a pre-requisite for retrofitting existing road sections with noise barriers and enclosures. In retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures on existing roads, the Administration would consider whether the noise barrier or enclosure would obstruct any emergency access or hinder fire fighting efforts and affect road safety, and whether there was adequate space and structural capability (applicable to flyovers) for supporting the noise barrier or enclosure. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that noise from existing roads was difficult to tackle and very limited options were available to reduce noise exposure.

Innovative noise mitigation designs and measures

15. Mr Tony TSE enquired whether the Administration would adopt innovative measures to reduce the traffic noise impact of existing roads on nearby residential blocks. The Chairman and Ms Claudia MO shared similar views that consideration should be given to installing "acoustic windows" in residential buildings next to busy roads to protect residents from excessive traffic noise. Mr Albert CHAN, however, pointed out that "acoustic windows" might not be able to ease traffic noise and allow natural ventilation at the same time. Given that noise barriers and enclosures might have potential air ventilation and visual impacts, Mr CHAN urged the Administration to strike a balance amongst noise mitigation, visual impact and air ventilation when retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures on busy roads. Mr TSE also opined that the Administration should proactively study the design of "acoustic windows" to make them more effective for abating traffic noise while ensuring good air ventilation.

16. ADEP(EA) advised that the most effective way to mitigate noise impact was to reduce noise at source and this involved retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures on existing roads. However, since the installing of "acoustic windows" was a less visually intrusive option than erecting noise barriers, a public housing development close to busy road under construction would be

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installed with "acoustic windows" to mitigate traffic noise. As for Project 810TH, PEPO(A&N) advised that HyD had appointed a consultant to study the environmental implications of the proposed works. According to the consultancy study, the project would not have any adverse impacts on air ventilation and air quality.

Greening design for noise barriers

17. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that while noise barriers could reduce traffic noise, they were visually intrusive. The Administration should enhance its efforts to improve the design of noise barriers so that they would be compatible with the surrounding environment. For example, ample plantings including climber planting and vertical greening should be provided to enhance the appearance of noise barriers. He urged the Administration to make reference to the vertical greening design adopted for the noise barriers of Yeung Uk Road in Tsuen Wan.

18. DPM/MW(2) advised that under Project 810TH, absorptive panels would be fixed at the bottom of the noise barriers to provide sufficient sound insulation. To minimize visual impact, transparent and translucent panels would be installed along the top section of the noise barriers where appropriate to reduce its apparent height and partially restore views. Roadside planters would also be placed along the footways behind the noise barriers at the Town Centre Section of Tuen Mun Road to improve aesthetics and promote green surroundings.

19. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok agreed that the most effective way to mitigate noise impact was to reduce noise at source. Apart from retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures on busy roads, resurfacing existing roads with low noise materials and optimizing traffic flow would also help reduce traffic noise. He shared Mr Albert CHAN's views that while noise barriers would provide noise protection to residential developments situated next to high-speed roads, they would have air ventilation and visual impacts and a tall barrier would block panoramic views and natural ventilation. He urged the Administration to exercise caution when planning and designing noise barriers and enclosures.

20. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok further enquired whether the road section under Project 810TH had been selected as the district setting of the Open International Ideas Competition for Noise Barrier/Enclosure Design ("the Design Competition") held in early 2009 by HyD and whether the design concept of the winning entries of the Design Competition had been adopted in the design of the noise barriers and enclosures of the project. DPM/MW(2) responded that the road section under Project 810TH had not been selected as the district setting of the Design Competition and the winning noise barrier design ideas of the Design Competition had been incorporated into the design of the noise



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barriers along the Tuen Mun Road at Town Centre.

21. Noting that in some overseas countries, hanging plants such as *Scindapsus aureus* were planted on noise barriers to improve the visual quality, the Chairman enquired about the common species of plants planted on the noise barriers of Hong Kong and whether such plants could absorb noise and carbon dioxide generated from passing vehicles. ADEP(EA) advised that while planting incorporated within a barrier design could soften its overall visual impact and beautify its appearance, it might not be very effective for mitigating traffic noise. DPM/MW(2) responded that *Sansevieria trifasciata* and *Parthenocissus dalzielii* were some plant species that had been used on noise barriers and enclosures in Hong Kong.

Generation of construction waste

22. Mr Tony TSE noted with concern that the proposed works would generate a huge quantity of about 26 300 tonnes of construction waste. DPM/MW(2) explained that most of the construction waste generated was due to excavation and foundation works. To minimize the disposal of construction waste at landfills, the Administration would reuse about 10 100 tonnes (i.e. 38%) of inert construction waste on site and deliver 14 600 tonnes (i.e. 56%) of inert construction waste to public fill reception facilities for subsequent reuse.

Objections relating to Project 810TH

23. The Chairman and Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the objections relating to the project. DPM/MW(2) advised that the Administration had received a total of about 1 240 objections which were all from a secondary school in the vicinity of the project site against the non-provision of noise mitigation measures such as erecting noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road fronting that secondary school. After resolution, 163 objections had subsequently been withdrawn.

24. ADEP(EA) explained that the suggestion of providing a full noise enclosure fronting the secondary school would have significant technical and cost implications. The Administration therefore considered the suggestion not viable. In fact, the secondary school had already been installed with double-glazed windows and air-conditioners in 1994 under the School Insulation Programme implemented by the then Education and Manpower Branch to mitigate traffic noise. ADEP(EA) further advised that the objection resolution had been completed in April 2013 and a modified noise barrier scheme was proposed to provide a vertical noise barrier which was approximately 40 metres in length and three metres in height fronting the caretakers' quarters of the secondary school. The Tuen Mun District Council and nearby residents were

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supportive of the modified noise barrier scheme and urged for early implementation.

Concluding remarks

25. The Chairman concluded that members supported the submission of the project proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration.

**VI. Monitoring the use of the Environment and Conservation Fund**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(06) — Administration's paper on "Monitoring the use of the Environment and Conservation Fund"

LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(07) — Updated background brief on "Environment and Conservation Fund" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

26. With the aid of a power-point presentation, the Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Community Relations) ("PEPO(CR)") briefed members on the operation and monitoring arrangements of the Environment and Conservation Fund ("ECF").

*(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation materials was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1508/13-14(01) on 27 May 2014.)*

Monitoring arrangements of ECF

27. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for ECF which aimed to provide funding support for educational, research and other projects and activities in relation to environmental and conservation matters. He was however concerned about the financial status of the non-profit-making organizations applying for ECF grants. To avoid abuse of ECF funding, Mr CHAN opined that the Administration should require all funding applicants to submit their financial reports or statements of accounts of the preceding year when they applied for ECF grants and to provide records of the income and expenses of their funded projects upon the completion of the projects. For the sake of transparency, such documents should also be made available on the ECF's website for public viewing.

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28. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1) ("DDEP(1)") responded that ECF had a well-established monitoring system to ensure that funded projects would meet the funding conditions as well as the objectives and planned deliverables as set out in the project proposals approved. For example, for projects receiving a grant over \$150,000 and lasting for more than 18 months, funding recipients were required to submit a statement of accounts audited by certified public accountants once every 12 months. Payments to project proponents were also made by installments subject to the satisfactory performance or progress of their projects, including the proponents' due compliance with the ECF funding rules in implementing their projects. USEN added that the ECF Committee would consider the suggestion of making public the financial status of project proponents when reviewing the existing monitoring arrangements of ECF.

29. Ms Claudia MO referred to her letter dated 22 November 2013 to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(1)407/13-14(01)) regarding a local organization which had been funded by ECF to launch a project to promote the reuse and recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment in Sham Shui Po. There had been media reports that the organization, which had a strong tie with the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, had been found using ECF grants to organize activities and programmes (e.g. barbecue and eco-tour) which were not directly related to the objectives of the funded project. Given that ECF was meant to provide funding support for educational, research and other projects and activities in relation to environmental and conservation matters, Ms MO urged for measures to ensure that ECF funding would not be abused.

30. DDEP(1) replied that according to the application procedures of ECF, all project proponents were required to set out the targets and work plans (including the activities and programmes to be conducted) of their projects in the funding applications for consideration of the ECF Committee or the vetting subcommittees. Payments to project proponents were made by installments subject to the satisfactory performance or progress of the funded projects, including the proponents' due compliance with the ECF funding rules in implementing their projects. As regards the aforesaid case, the Administration had conducted investigation into it and found that the barbecue and eco-tour had not been included in the work plan of the project concerned. As such, the Administration would not make disbursement of funds to subsidize the activities. The Administration had also issued a warning to the project proponent, urging it to remove the name and logo of ECF from the publicity materials of the activities. USEN supplemented that the Administration would keep records of non-compliance cases such that the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees could take into account the past performance of individual project proponents when vetting their funding applications.

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31. Noting that there were a total of 2 600 inspections conducted over the past three years, Mr Charles MOK sought elaboration on the monitoring work of the ECF Secretariat to examine the progress of different approved projects. DDEP(1) reiterated that when making funding applications, all project proponents were required to set out the targets and work plans of their projects for consideration of the ECF Committee or the vetting subcommittees. Once the proposed projects or activities were approved, the ECF Committee, the vetting subcommittees and the ECF Secretariat might randomly carry out visits or surprise checks to examine the progress of the projects to ensure that they were run in a satisfactory manner. For projects costing over \$150,000, audited statements of account would have to be prepared once a year and within two months of the completion of the projects. To further ensure the proper use of public funds, the Administration planned to recruit certified public accountants to carry out audit checks on approved projects.

32. The Deputy Chairman agreed that there was a need to step up the monitoring of ECF and enhance the transparency of the vetting mechanism in order to safeguard the proper use of public funds. He urged the Administration to draw up a "blacklist" of organizations which had breached ECF funding rules for reference of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees such that they might, under certain circumstances, refuse applications from those "blacklisted" organizations. The Deputy Chairman also opined that the Administration should carefully examine the audited statements of accounts provided by project proponents before the approved amount was disbursed so as to ensure that only the items on the approved budget would be reimbursed.

33. DDEP(1) assured members that the Administration had been closely monitoring the use of ECF, in particular the disbursement and reimbursement of funds. According to the existing guidelines, funding would normally be disbursed to project proponents on reimbursement basis and the Administration would disburse the approved amount to project proponents by installments rather than in one go. In addition, except for the first disbursement, all disbursements would only be released upon satisfactory progress or completion of the projects. Nevertheless, the Administration was conducting a review on the disbursement and reimbursement of funds in order to strike an appropriate balance between enhancing the efficiency of the process and ensuring the proper use of public funds.

34. Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired whether the Administration had received any complaints about the use of ECF-funded activities for personal, political, commercial or religious publicity for any individual or groups over the past three years. DDEP(1) responded that the Administration had so far received three complaints about the misuse of funds. After conducting investigations into the complaints, the Administration had issued warning letters to three

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organizations which had been found to have carried out political publicity while implementing ECF-funded projects. Since then, the Administration had not received funding applications from these organizations.

35. DDEP(1) further advised that apart from acting promptly on complaints received, the Administration had been proactively monitoring different funded projects and activities. For example, project proponents were required to submit the educational, promotional or other materials of their projects or activities to ECF for scrutiny. The ECF Committee, the vetting subcommittees and the ECF Secretariat might also carry out visits to examine the progress of different funded projects and activities. DDEP(1) stressed that ECF was meant to provide funding support to non-profit-making organizations and all projects seeking ECF grants had to be non-profit-making in nature.

Buildings Energy Efficiency Funding Schemes and other funding schemes

36. In response to Dr Kenneth CHAN's enquiry about the "Energy Efficiency Projects" ("EEP") and "Energy-cum-Carbon Audit Projects" ("ECAP"), DDEP(1) explained that EEP aimed to encourage building owners to carry out improvement works to upgrade the energy efficiency performance of different building services installations such as lighting, lifts and escalators, whereas ECAP intended to promote energy-cum-carbon audits for buildings in Hong Kong to enhance energy efficiency and reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions arising from building operations.

37. USEN further advised that both EEP and ECAP were projects under the Buildings Energy Efficiency Funding Schemes ("BEEFS") which were set up under ECF with a funding allocation of \$450 million. BEEFS aimed to provide grants on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis to support and subsidize building owners to carry out EEP or ECAP at their buildings. Since its launch in 2009, BEEFS had received overwhelming response and were closed in 2012. USEN assured members that the Administration would continue to promote the enhancement of building energy efficiency to address the challenges of climate change. The Administration planned to set out the policies on promoting energy efficiency and green buildings in the autumn of 2014.

38. Mr Charles MOK enquired about the funding scheme entitled "Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Projects" as mentioned in Appendix 1 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1460/13-14(06)). PEPO(CR) explained that from 2008 to 2013, a total of about 71 environmental research and technology demonstration projects had been approved under ECF with a funding allocation of \$65 million. During the same period, 13 international conferences costing around \$10 million were also held to facilitate exchange of experience on environmental and conservation issues.

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As requested by the Chairman, the Administration agreed to provide the number of applications approved under ECF which sought funding support exceeding \$2 million and hence were vetted by the ECF Committee in each of the past seven years.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1730/13-14(01) on 2 July 2014.)*

39. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would set a theme for ECF each year to enable more focused efforts to be put on promoting particular environmental matters. He also held the view that ECF-funded activities could serve as models for implementing similar schemes in the community in future. The Administration should draw reference from these activities with a view to formulating and pursuing community-wide environmental policies. Mr Frankie YICK shared the Deputy Chairman's views that the Administration should proactively designate topical themes for ECF each year to attract non-profit-making organizations to apply for funding to organize theme-related projects, thus facilitating the Administration to promote the themes throughout the territory.

40. In response, USEN assured members that the Administration would identify core themes for ECF from time to time to promote specific environmental or conservation matters. Since its establishment, ECF had been providing funding to eligible environment and conservation programmes that met emerging policy priorities and public expectations. ECF would continue to set priority areas for projects and activities in order to promote behavioural changes for protecting the environment in the community. DDEP(1) supplemented that ECF had adopted "Waste Reduction" as its theme for the current year, with a particular focus on reducing food waste. Approximately over half of the budget of ECF for the current year had been allocated for programmes on waste reduction. The Administration would also take ECF-funded projects and activities into account when planning environmental policies and measures.

#### Composition of the ECF Committee and its subcommittees

41. Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the composition of the ECF Committee and the three vetting subcommittees. To uphold the integrity of ECF, she opined that the composition of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees should be broadly representative, comprising members from different political parties and background. There should also be a declaration of interests system and a redress mechanism to ensure that the assessment of funding applications were fair and just. To enhance the transparency of the assessment process, consideration should be given to allowing the public to

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observe the meetings of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees.

42. USEN responded that the ECF Committee and the various vetting subcommittees were responsible for vetting funding applications and monitoring approved projects. Since the work of vetting and approving was highly specialized, members of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees were required to have specialized knowledge in the fields of environmental protection and nature conservation. The Administration would not take into account a person's political affiliation when making appointment. USEN further said that the deliberations of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees might involve sensitive information of individual funding applications, and hence it was not appropriate to allow the public to observe the meetings.

43. DDEP(1) stressed that the Administration attached great importance to the impartiality of the work of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees. Advice had been sought from the Independent Commission Against Corruption on the appropriate procedures for vetting funding applications. Furthermore, a two-tier system for declaration of interests had been adopted by members of the ECF committee and the vetting subcommittees. Under the system, each member was required to report in writing his personal interests upon appointment or re-appointment and subsequently on a yearly basis, and to declare any conflict of interests as and when it arose, such as when individual applications were reviewed and assessed. Members of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees who were directly or indirectly related to an application would be required to declare interest and refrain from taking part in the discussion of that application by leaving the venue where the deliberations took place. Staff of relevant government departments, academics and experts in relevant fields would also be invited to provide professional views on individual applications where necessary. Minutes of meetings of the ECF Committee and the vetting subcommittees as well as relevant papers and reports were made available for public viewing.

**VII. Any other business**

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:35 pm.