

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)107/13-14(04)

Ref. : CB1/PL/EA

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on 28 October 2013

**Background brief on "Legislative amendments relating to the
'Waste Diversion Plan' for the Southeast New Territories Landfill"
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on waste diversion for the Southeast New Territories Landfill ("the SENT Landfill"), and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by Members on the subject.

Background

Proposed extension of landfills

2. Hong Kong relies principally on landfills to treat its waste. At present, municipal solid waste ("MSW") (comprising domestic waste as well as commercial and industrial waste) is collected, transferred and disposed of at the three strategic landfills, namely, the Southeast New Territories ("SENT") Landfill in Tseung Kwan O ("TKO"), the Northeast New Territories ("NENT") Landfill at Ta Kwu Ling, and the West New Territories ("WENT") Landfill at Nim Wan. The Government anticipates that the remaining capacities of the SENT Landfill, the NENT Landfill and the WENT Landfill will be exhausted one by one by 2019 if waste levels continue to increase at the present rate.

3. In his 2013 Policy Address, the Chief Executive has stated that expansion of landfills is an integral part of the overall strategy of waste management. There is an urgent need to extend the three landfills to serve as the final repositories for non-recyclable and residual waste as the associated tendering and construction works for landfill extension projects will take several years to complete. The Environment Bureau also issued in May 2013 the "Hong Kong: Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" ("the Action

Blueprint"), which maps out a comprehensive strategy, targets, policies and action plans for waste management for the coming ten years.

4. The Government submitted the funding proposals for the three landfill extension projects for the Panel on Environmental Affair ("the Panel")'s consideration at its meeting on 27 May 2013.

Waste diversion under the proposed SENT Landfill Extension

5. The Government anticipates that the SENT Landfill will be exhausted in 2014-2015, and considers that timely extension of the landfill is crucial as an integral part of Hong Kong's waste management strategy set out in the Action Blueprint. According to the Government, it is essential to extend the SENT Landfill because it is the territory's single largest disposal outlet for construction waste due to the synergy created by the proximity of the SENT Landfill, the construction waste sorting facility (to sort out inert fill materials for later beneficial reuse) and the public fill bank (to stockpile inert fill materials) in TKO Area 137.

6. Among the three landfills, the SENT Landfill is the closest to major residential developments and hence calls for extra efforts in addressing community concerns on air quality, odour and dust. The Government has proposed to designate the SENT Landfill Extension for the reception of only construction waste with no odour concern¹. MSW would no longer be accepted upon the designation, resulting in reduction of relevant vehicle count by half when only construction waste is received. Waste haulers would then need to redirect their MSW to other waste reception or disposal facilities sometime in 2014-2015 and action is already in place to remind the waste haulers to plan ahead. In addition, from mid-2013, an on-site odour monitoring team will operate from 6 am to 2 am every day to enhance monitoring on and provide swift response to odour issue. To step up monitoring on air quality, the Government will measure PM_{2.5} at Wan Po Road from July 2013 onwards, and establish an air monitoring station in TKO. To address the concerns on dust, frequent cleansing of Wan Po Road has been arranged.

Deliberations by Members

7. The Panel was consulted on the three landfill extension projects on 27 May 2013. It also held a meeting on 1 June 2013 to receive public views on the subject. The extension projects were further considered by the Public Works

¹ This designation requires legislative amendments to the Waste Disposal (Designated Waste Disposal Facility) Regulation under the Waste Disposal Ordinance.

Subcommittee ("PWSC"). At the PWSC meeting on 26 June 2013, the Administration advised that it decided to withdraw the proposed SENT Landfill Extension project as it could not secure the majority support of PWSC. The NENT and WENT Landfill Extension projects were discussed by PWSC on 26 June and 2 July 2013, and the Finance Committee on 12 July 2013.

8. In the course of deliberation at the Panel and PWSC meetings, members had given views on the proposed waste diversion for the SENT Landfill Extension and complementary measures.

Discussion by the Panel on Environmental Affairs

9. The views and concerns raised by members and the deputations/individuals at the Panel meetings primarily related to the odour, traffic and environmental issues pertinent to the operation of the SENT Landfill.

10. Some members pointed out that although legislative amendments would be made to designate the proposed SENT Landfill Extension for the reception of only construction waste with no odour concern, TKO residents were concerned about the toxicity of the construction waste to be deposited in the SENT Landfill Extension. In response, the Administration explained that construction waste was defined under the Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation and there had been close monitoring on its disposal at landfills. Under the Construction Waste Charging Scheme, records had been kept on the disposal of construction waste and spot checks were made on waste loads. As the engagement of registered qualified asbestos professionals was mandatory for the demolition of building structures with asbestos-containing materials, it was unlikely that asbestos would be mixed with other construction waste for disposal at landfills.

11. On odour concerns, the Administration advised that measures had been implemented to reduce the environmental nuisances arising from the SENT Landfill and these included the cleaning of refuse collection vehicles ("RCVs"), the use of odour abatement equipment and the monitoring of air quality.

12. Some members expressed concern that all odorous food waste would be disposed of at the WENT and NENT Landfills if the SENT Landfill no longer received MSW. The nuisance associated with transport of waste was another cause of concern on account of the long distance in the delivery of waste to the two landfills.

13. At the Panel meeting on 27 May 2013, the motion that "this Panel objects to the Southeast New Territories landfill extension project" was passed.

Discussion by the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee

14. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of the SENT Landfill Extension project at the PWSC meeting on 26 June 2013, members urged the Administration to take immediate action to address the concerns of TKO residents who were facing the nuisance associated with the operation of the existing SENT Landfill.

15. With regard to the Administration's proposal to designate the proposed SENT Landfill Extension for reception of only construction waste, some members expressed concern about the diversion of vehicular loads to the NENT Landfill which would add great pressure to the busy Sha Tau Kok Road. They also pointed out that RCVs would have to travel longer by road transport to deliver MSW to the NENT and WENT Landfills, which would increase the cost of garbage collection. RCVs were often forced to park overnight, with their load of refuse, in nearby open areas if they arrived after the operating hours of landfills, thereby causing odour nuisance. A member suggested that Police should be stationed at Wan Po Road to take enforcement action against speeding and fly-tipping activities. There was also a suggestion that the Administration should increase the usage of various refuse transfer stations ("RTSs") for transferring waste with a view to reducing the volume of MSW delivered directly to landfills by RCVs, thereby minimizing the associated environmental nuisance. The Administration responded that it would study the utilization of RTSs to handle the increased quantities of waste to be delivered to other landfills in future and work out measures to improve waste transportation.

16. On the retrofitting of RCVs, members generally supported the Administration's proposal to subsidize retrofitting of RCVs to make them fully enclosed to reduce odour. They urged the Administration to speed up the retrofitting work and strengthen the cleaning of the roads leading to landfills. In response, the Administration advised that it had been working closely with the waste collection sector on improving the design and operation of RCVs to address the various environmental nuisances. A pilot test to retrofit different models of RCVs was carried out with the collaboration of the trade. A code of practice on RCV operation had also been prepared and promulgated.

17. At the PWSC meeting on 2 July 2013, some members pointed out that as waste collectors would take longer distances to transport waste to the NENT and WENT Landfills after the SENT Landfill ceased to receive MSW, the cost of waste collection and disposal would be increased significantly. The Administration should therefore increase the provision of RTSs and deliver more waste by marine transport in order to minimize nuisance and relieve pressure on road network associated with transportation of waste by RCVs. Some other members queried whether RCVs would really use the service of RTSs, given the high waste handling charges of RTS. The Administration

undertook to conduct a review to maximize the utilization of RTS which could reduce the impact on the road network.

18. Some other members commented that the Administration should tackle the environmental problems arising from the operation of RCVs regardless of whether the landfills would be extended. Many RCVs or waste trucks, which were turned away from landfills due to overloading, had dumped the refuse illegally. The Administration assured members that apart from taking law enforcement action against overloading and maintaining a dialogue with the trade sector, it planned to install CCTVs at black spots to increase deterrent effects and such equipment would be installed in TKO before 2014. The Administration would also liaise with the respective District Councils and work out the details on stepping up enforcement actions in the known black spots as early as possible.

19. On the design of RCVs, the Administration would maintain close liaison with the trade sector to improve the design and installation of all RCVs to minimize the environmental nuisances. Necessary legislation would be introduced to ensure that RCVs would be installed with the required cover and leachate storage tank, and enforcement actions would be taken against operators who did not comply with the requirements or did not use the cover when operating the RCVs. The Environmental Protection Department was exploring with the Civil Engineering and Development Department to make arrangements for more public fill materials to be transferred by marine access, which would help reduce the traffic pressure on Wan Po Road.

20. At the Finance Committee meeting on 12 July 2013, members in general were of the view that the Administration should map out a comprehensive strategy for waste management and make its best endeavour to address the concerns of local communities over the operation of the three landfills before pursuing waste incineration and landfill extension. Two motions were passed at the meeting to adjourn discussion on the NENT and WENT Landfill Extension projects.

Council questions

21. Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon Miriam LAU, Hon IP Wai-ming and Hon James TIEN raised questions relating to landfill operation at the LegCo meetings on 4 March 2009, 23 June and 3 November 2010, 18 May 2011, 1 February and 19 December 2012 and 26 June 2013. Details of the Council questions are hyperlinked in the **Appendix** for ease of reference.

Latest development

22. The Administration will consult the Panel on the legislative amendments relating to the "Waste Diversion Plan" for the SENT Landfill and other complementary measures at the meeting scheduled for 28 October 2013.

Relevant papers

23. A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 October 2013

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Environmental Affairs	20 May 2013*	<p>"Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" issued by the Environment Bureau (LC Paper No. CB(1)1076/12-13(01))</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/eacb1-1076-1-e.pdf</p>
Panel on Environmental Affairs	27 May 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Environmental infrastructure projects (a) 5163DR: Northeast New Territories landfill extension (b) 5164DR: Southeast New Territories landfill extension (c) 5165DR: West New Territories landfill extension" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1079/12-13(01))</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0527cb1-1079-1-e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief on "Extension of landfills" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1079/12-13(02))</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0527cb1-1079-2-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1536/12-13)</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea20130527.pdf</p>
Panel on Environmental Affairs	1 June 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Environmental infrastructure projects (a) 5163DR: Northeast New Territories landfill extension (b) 5164DR: Southeast New Territories landfill extension (c) 5165DR: West New Territories landfill extension" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1079/12-13(01))</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0527cb1-1079-1-e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief on "Extension of landfills" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1079/12-13(02))</p> <p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0527cb1-1079-2-e.pdf</p>

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Public Works Subcommittee	26 June 2013	<p>Funding proposals on Head 705 – Civil Engineering</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 164DR Southeast New Territories Landfill Extension (LC Paper No. PWSC(2013-14)25) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p13-25e.pdf 2. 163DR Northeast New Territories Landfill Extension (LC Paper No. PWSC(2013-14)20) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p13-20e.pdf 3. 165DR West New Territories Landfill Extension (LC Paper No. PWSC(2013-14)21) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p13-21e.pdf <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC85/12-13) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20130626.pdf</p>
Public Works Subcommittee	2 July 2013	<p>Funding proposals on Head 705 – Civil Engineering</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 163DR Northeast New Territories Landfill Extension (LC Paper No. PWSC(2013-14)20) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p13-20e.pdf 2. 165DR West New Territories Landfill Extension (LC Paper No. PWSC(2013-14)21) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p13-21e.pdf <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC87/12-13) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20130702.pdf</p>
Finance Committee	12 July 2013	<p>Recommendations of the Public Works Subcommittee made on 24 June and 2 July 2013 (LC Paper No. FCR(2013-14)31) http://legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/fc/papers/f13-31e.pdf</p>

*Date of issuance of papers

Hyperlinks to relevant Council Questions:

Date	Council Question
4 March 2009	Council question raised by Hon CHAN Hak-kan http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200903/04/P200903040188.htm
23 June 2010	Council question raised by Hon Miriam LAU http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201006/23/P201006230128.htm
3 November 2010	Council question raised by Hon WONG Kwok-hing http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201011/03/P201011030148.htm
18 May 2011	Council question raised by Hon Miriam LAU http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201105/18/P201105180172.htm
1 February 2012	Council question raised by Hon IP Wai-ming http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201202/01/P201202010263.htm
19 December 2012	Council question raised by Hon James TIEN http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201212/19/P201212190291.htm
26 June 2013	Council question raised by Hon James TIEN http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201306/26/P201306260311.htm